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LITURGY

EDITORIAL

CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARISTIC LITURGY
IN DIFFERENT ECCLESIAL TRADITIONS

Fr. Geo Thadikkatt

EUGENE CARDINAL TISSERANT AND EASTERN CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA

Xaiver Koodappuzha

MARY IN THE CATHOLIC - ASSYRIAN DIALOGUE: AN ASSYRIAN PERSPECTIVE

Bishop Mar Bawai Soro, Assyrian Church of the East

Documentation

THE SPEECH MADE BY HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO THE SYRO-MALABAR BISHOPS ON
THE OCCASION OF ADLIMINA VISIT ON 13TH MAY 2003

BOOK REVIEW, NEWS

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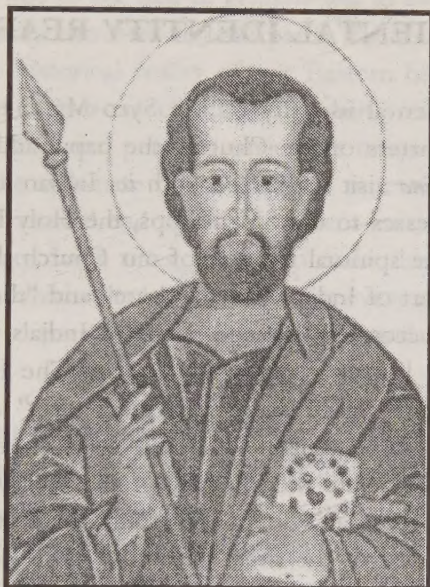
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MY LORD and MY GOD



ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE OF INDIA

*Oh! St. Thomas, Father of our Church,
receive the plethora of multi-hued,
and sweet - scented flowers of faith
blossomed on the ecclesial tree
which you have planted
in this rich soil of India*

Fervent festal greetings

to all our readers and well wishers
on the **DUKHRANA** of St Thomas

EDITORIAL

INDO-ORIENTAL IDENTITY REAFFIRMED

Even as the Oriental identity of the Syro-Malabar liturgy is looked upon suspiciously by certain quarters of the Church, the papal address to the Syro-Malabar bishops during their *ad limina* visit reaffirmed both its Indian and Eastern identity. As in the previous *ad limina* addresses to the SM bishops, the Holy Father dwells at length on the liturgy, which marks the spiritual treasure of our Church. He spells out that the SM liturgy is for “centuries a part of India’s varied culture” and “the most vivid expression of our people’s identity.” By becoming part and parcel of India’s varied cult and culture for centuries, our East Syrian liturgy is genuinely Indian. The Holy Father exhorted the Bishops to “guard and renew this treasure with great care,” ... and quoting his recent encyclical he told them to “to be vigilant to protect against unwarranted experimentation by individual priests, which violate the integrity of the liturgy and can also cause great harm to the faithful.” Dispelling any doubts regarding the eastern heritage of the liturgy he delineated that the renewal of the ritual patrimony is to be done in the light of the Council documents, with particular attention given to *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* and in the context of the *Code of Canon Law of the Eastern Churches* and his own apostolic letter *Oriente Lumen*, all documents concerning ORIENTAL CHURCHES. Thus, the papal address expresses in unequivocal terms that the direction, which should be taken for the SM liturgical renewal is nothing but that of the Oriental one. Finally, the Holy Father hopes that “with prudence patience and proper catechesis the renewal process will bear abundant fruit”... so that “the liturgy will not merely be studied but also be celebrated in all its integrity and beauty.”

Although there were mixed responses to this admonition by way of misinterpreted observations, which appeared in certain publications, one cannot ignore the fact that papal observations on the oriental nature of SM liturgy is not a new thing. In the 1980 *ad limina* visit’s papal message termed the SM Church as “Eastern and authentically Indian,” and exhorted the bishops to take seriously the council deliberations to “retain the traditions of the rite whole and entire” (OE 2) and to “preserve the lawful liturgical rites and established way of life and that these should not be altered except by

way of an appropriate and organic development.” (OE 6). In the 1996’s SM Synodal address in Rome the Holy Father also spoke in unambiguous terms on the “East Syrian ecclesial heritage” of our Church, which we have “lived for centuries with pride and enthusiasm.”

However, these repeated papal exhortations were not received well in SM Church as a whole, partly due to the lack of genuine will to catechise on the part of those whom the liturgy is primarily entrusted to, and partly due to the reluctance of some SM theologians to accept the historical reality of our Eastern heritage and to translate this into a lived reality. When proper catechesis and genuine researches are lacking, vested interests, beloved predilections and personal prejudices mount up to take their role! This is what is the reason of the stalemate of the liturgical renewal in the SM Church, and in many cases the attempted renewal end up in subservient imitations of the usages of other ecclesial traditions, so to say, Latin ones, leading to make the Syro-Malabar Church a ‘B’ team of the Latin Church, which theologically shuts its every possibility to be an authentic Church having the rights to preach to the entire nation and to look after its children in its own identity.

Let us hope that the address of the Holy Father be taken seriously by the pastors of the Church and take necessary steps to halt all anti-oriental propaganda and translate the holy Fathers exhortation into a full appreciation of the spiritual patrimony of our age-old liturgy, so that it may be celebrated and lived in all its integrity and beauty.

The contributions in this issue of Christian Orient are in view of appreciating our liturgy in the wider scenario of the Eastern Christian heritage. We have the lead article of this issue by X. Koodapuzha, which is not on a subject but on a person who have made inestimable contributions towards the emergence of SM Church as a genuinely Oriental Church. The contribution of G. Thadikatt focuses on the aspects of celebration of the eucharistic liturgy in different ecclesial traditions. The third article on Mary in the context of ecumenical dialogue sheds new lights into the awareness of Mariology in the Christian East. We have also as documentation the papal exhortation to the SM bishop’s *ad limina* visit, which deals besides with the liturgy, the fraternal functioning of the Synod pastoral care of the faithful and the authentic evangelisation.

Editor

Dr. Jose Kochuparampil

CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARISTIC LITURGY IN DIFFERENT ECCLESIAL TRADITIONS

Fr. Geo Thadikkatt

The people of God are engaged in their day-to-day life in the celebration of the liturgy, which nourishes their spiritual life and gives them God experience. There are many liturgies celebrated in the Catholic Church; so also among other Christian denominations. However, the main distinction may be seen as between the Eastern Churches and the Latin Church. Coming to the practical application of certain principles, there are some differences among the Easterners themselves. The practical aspects of the celebration of the liturgy of a *sui iuris* Church varies, while some of these Churches may be using the liturgy belonging to one liturgical tradition. We do not go to the details of the celebrations in all *sui iuris* Churches, but the general characteristics of four liturgical traditions are discussed here. Practical aspects of celebration gives importance to places, persons, position, and materials used in the liturgy.

1. CELEBRATION OF EUCHARISTIC LITURGY

1.1 Altar

The structure and plan of a church vary considerably according to its size, the architectural design and various other factors. Still we can speak about the structure of a church. It is to be noted that the ancient churches were made in such a way that the liturgy might be celebrated facing the east. Adrian Fortescue says: "According to the old practice in all the traditions including Roman, churches were ORIENTATED, that is, the High Altar was at the East end and the main entrance at the West."¹

In all the traditions, the altars stand away from the wall, in order to allow processions to pass around it. In the fourth century, it became customary to raise the altar above the ground by means of a step. The general rule in churches of the Eastern rite is that there should be only one altar in every church, and, likewise, that only one sacrifice should be offered on any particular day upon the altar.² In the East Syriac church there is only one altar in the sanctuary. Altar is considered as the throne of God; Sanctuary is heaven on earth. In the Syro-Malabar church, it was called

1. Adrian Fortescue, *The Ceremonies of the Rite Described*, (London, Burns Oates and Washbourne Ltd., 1920), I
2. This explains the importance of concelebration in the Eastern rites, by which means a number of priests can offer the same sacrifice together at the same time. Salaville, *Eastern Liturgies*, 135

sornos in Malayalam, which means throne.³ It is never raised by more than one step; often, it remains at the level of the sanctuary floor.⁴ In the Syro-Malabar church, altar is also considered as the sepulchre of our Lord.⁵ Along with the book of *Evangelion*⁶ (on the right side) and sacred vessels (at the time of the liturgy of the Eucharist) the St. Thomas Cross (in the middle) is kept on the altar, as a perfect symbol of Our Lord's Resurrection.⁷ In the Church of the East the altar is considered a holy place. Only the ordained persons are allowed to enter the altar and that too with fasting and with proper vestments and special shoes. The two minor orders of Readers and subdeacons were allowed only to the steps, not inside the sanctuary. If these rules are violated, the altar will have to be consecrated with oil or without oil; according to the nature of the desecration as prescribed in the canon law.⁸

Where and when there is no permanent and consecrated altar available, all the Eastern rites use wooden portable altars, known as the "altar stones", for liturgical celebration. In the East Syriac rite, the altar stone is called *Dapa*. After the consecration by the bishop, it is always kept in a sheath made of white cloth, having three cross signs over.⁹ The beth gaze, (treasure houses), are arranged on both sides of the altar. They are made as niches or recesses in the northern and southern walls of the sanctuary. Chalice is prepared in the *beth gazza* on the southern side and paten in that on the northern side.¹⁰

In most West Syriac churches, there are three altars¹¹, the centre one being surmounted by a canopy. The altars are approached by three steps.¹² Where there is no permanent altar, the altar stone is consecrated with chrism by the bishop on Holy Thursday.¹³

3. Pathikulangara, *Qurbana*, 60, 140.

4. Salaville, *Eastern Liturgies*, 134

5. Pathikulangara, *Qurbana*, 140.

6. It is a Gospel Lectionary in the *Pisita* version of the Bible. Pathikulangara, *Qurbana*, 141.

7. The four ends of the cross, just like blooming new buds proclaim the new life, which we have gained through participation in Jesus' Resurrection. The flowery cross reminds us always as mark of early Christianity and its victory over death through Jesus Christ. The empty cross like empty tomb is a symbol of the Resurrection. So also is the descending of the Holy Spirit. See. Varghese Pathikulangara, Church and Celebration - The Interior of a Church or Chapel in the Chaldeo- Indian Tradition, (Kottayam, Denha Services, 1986), 17-21; Ouseph Vazhuthanappally, "AQ Historico - Archaeological site study and research on Mar Thoma Sliva", *Christian Orient X*, 2 (1989), 80-89; Pathikulangara, *Qurbana*, 60, 141-42.

8. Mar Aprem, *Sacraments of the Church of the East* (Trichur : Mar Narsai Press, 1978), 60

9. Pathikulangara, *Qurbana*, 142.

10. Pathikulangara, *Qurbana*, 142.

11. The general rule in churches of Eastern rite is that there should be only one altar in each church, and, like wise, that only one sacrifice should be offered on any particular day upon the altar. In order to facilitate the liturgical celebration by three in the church at the same time, they introduced three separate altars. This is done at the time of facts and other solemnities. Some times the number of altars are increased to five or seven.

12. Day, *Eastern Christian Liturgies*, 156.

13. Day, *Eastern Christian Liturgies*, 158.

In Byzantine church the altar was made of stone, whereas its base might be of some other material. The altar table was almost square in shape, was supported by four little columns or posts; known as *baldacchino*. Between the columns, curtains known as *tetravela* were formerly placed; these were closed at certain moments of the sacred rite.¹⁴ In its composite setting, the altar has the form of a tomb,¹⁵ so it symbolizes the tomb of Our Lord. Altar also symbolizes the throne of God, and the table of the Last Supper.¹⁶ The altar had on it only the sacred vessels and the book of the Gospels and a little cross in a flat position, with which the celebrant frequently blessed the faithful in the course of the ceremonies.¹⁷

In the Byzantine tradition, in place of altar stone is the *Antimension*, which represents a portable form of altar. It is a square piece of linen or silk, measuring 20 to 24 inches, folded into two, in which are sewn up relics, anointed with the holy chrism. On this, various patterns are printed in black. The chief of these represent the Descent from the Cross and the placing of our Lord's body in the tomb. On the reverse side, a little pocket holds some pieces of relics. This simplified form

of altar goes back to the period of the iconoclastic persecutions of the eighth century.¹⁸ Though in the eighteenth century the use of *Antimension* on a consecrated altar was prohibited, at the present day, it has become a normal procedure, among the Catholic Byzantines. "The antimension is ordinarily used on the consecrated altars; It is folded and unfolded at the same time as the *eileton* or corporal. The latter is generally placed under the *antimension* and has no other purpose than to enfold it."¹⁹ The consecration of *antimension* is carried out with rites which generally resemble those used in the dedication of altar stones. To the left of the altar, in the little apse on the north side, is the prothesis, used in the rite of preparation of the bread and wine for the sacrifice.²⁰

In the Latin tradition, the altar is designed to recall a table, as the meal aspect is emphasized in the mass; where the Lord's disciples continue to celebrate the meal once eaten by Jesus and the twelve. Thus, the altar is the "Lord's table". The word "altar" expresses more the cultic aspect of the Eucharist and the presence of Christ's sacrifice, is present as food to nourish the faithful, it also points to the outward form

14. Slaville, *Eastern Liturgies*, 135. This use does not appear to have persisted in the Byzantine rite since the iconostasis became common. The veil used in front of the sanctuary in the East Syrian rite is the continuation of this tradition. West Syrians also keep this tradition.

15. Salaville, *Eastern Liturgies*, 133.

16. Wybrew, *The Orthodox Liturgy*, 124.

17. Salaville, *Eastern Liturgies*, 134, 136.

18. Salaville, *Eastern Liturgies*, 152 - 53.

19. S. Petrides, "Antimension", in *Diet. de theologic catholique*, vol. i, col. i. col 1391, Quoted in Salaville, *Eastern Liturgies*, 153.

20. Salaville, *Eastern Liturgies*, 137.

of his presence.²¹ According to the General Instruction, "The altar on which the sacrifice of the cross is made present under sacramental signs is also the table of the Lord in which the people of God are called together to participate during the Mass; it is also the center of the thanksgiving service that is accomplished in the Eucharist" (GI. 259)

Along with the Missal; sacred vessels, candles and other things were put on the altar; the cross was kept in the standing position, and the Gospel Lectionary is not kept on the altar. According to the ancient tradition of Latin rite, a large church will probably have a number of side chapels or side altars, which may be placed anywhere; the normal principle would be that each altar faces the East.²² However, in the sanctuary there is only one altar in the middle, known as the High altar. A fixed altar is made of stone and built into the church and is consecrated by the bishop according to the rite as described in the liturgical books. The relics are buried in it. The altar made of stone has two symbolic meanings. It is the type of Christ. Stone symbolizes the rock, from which Moses caused the water to flow. "They drank from the spiritual rock that went with them; and that rock was Christ himself" (1 Cor. 10:4). This rock is the foundation or cornerstone

of the whole building. Altar stone also symbolizes the altar for the offering of holocausts, as seen in Gen. 28 : 18 and Dt. 27:5-7.²³ In the New Law, Christ is the unique altar just as he is the unique temple.²⁴

The portable altar, made of stone or wood, is not meant to be permanent and, hence, is simply blessed. In the middle is put the altar stone, a comparatively small, perhaps about one foot square or so, and an inch or two thick, consecrated by the bishop, and on which the mass is said.²⁵ According to the General Instruction on the Roman Missal, it is not necessary to have a consecrated stone in a movable altar or on the table where the eucharist is celebrated outside a sacred place (GI. 262-66).

2.2 Vestments, Altar Vessels, Instruments and Clothes

The liturgical vestments of a priest during the celebration of the Eucharistic liturgy in all the traditions remain the same, with minor changes. They are the following;

1. The alb, known as *Kottina*, *kutbino* and *stikharion* a long tunic type garment, reaching from the neck to the ankles, is the dress used by Jesus Christ. The one who puts on this dress is putting on Christ and performs His ministry in his place:

-
21. Johannes H. Emminghaus, *The Eucharist, Essence, Form, Celebration*, trans. Mathew J. O' Connell, (Collegeville, Minnesota, The Liturgical Press, 1978), 159. (Cited further as, Emminghaus, *The Eucharist*)
 22. Fortescue, Ceremonies, 1
 23. A.G. Martimort, ed *The Church at Prayer : Introduction to the Liturgy*, (New York, Desclee Company, 1968), 170. (Cited further as Martimort, *Introduction to the Liturgy*).
 24. Pseudo-Dionysius, *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 4,12.
 25. Fortescue, Ceremonies, 3
-

2. The cincture, (*Zunara, zunnoro, Zone or Girdle*) a belt like strip of cloth worn over the tunic type garment at the waist is the symbol of "Chastity". The holy *Qurbana* and all other liturgical rites are to be performed with perfect holiness, keeping oneself from all kinds of worldly thoughts and emotions. While it is given to the minister in the East Syriac Church the bishop prays, "Gird your servant, my Lord, with the thread of chastity that he persist in your ministry with wholeness and sanctity for ever".

3. The stole (*urara, uroro, epitrakhelion or Peritrakhelion*) is about four inches wide, which is worn around the neck and of which the two ends fall down in front almost to the feet. In West Syrian tradition it is a broad strip of the same material as the outer vestment with an aperture through which to pass the head, ornamented with crosses. In the Latin tradition it is worn round the neck, crossed in front and secured by the ends of the girdle. This vestment is the symbol of ministerial priesthood, namely the divine authorization to act in the name of God for his people. It also 'indicates the stole of the flesh of Christ dyed by his undefiled blood on the cross'.

4. Cuffs (*Zande, zendo, epimanikia, epimanika or hypomanikia*) are two sleevelets, ornamented with a cross each, which cover the ends of the long tunic's sleeves. This is not usually used in the latin tradition. In the ancient days there was a

Maniple, a band of silk, which was worn on the left arm.

5. In the East and West Syrian tradition the outermost garment known as *Paina* (*Phaino*) is divided up the front, becoming similar to a cope with no hood, which has a cross on the upper part of the back and is fastened by a loop and button or clasps. In the Byzantine and Latin Church the outer garment (*phailonion, Chasuble*) has a hole through which the head is passed. This is a garment of justice. In the East Syriac rite the bishop prays, while giving this dress to the candidate: "Let our Lord and our God put on the garment of justice that you may please Him all through your life on earth by serving Him sincerely, nobly and holily." It proclaims the fact that a priest is the fount and source of all kinds of virtues. Historically, *Paina* appears to be the outer garment of the shepherds, thus showing the pastoral duty of priest. It also symbolizes Christ's yoke.²⁶

6. It is the speciality of the Latin Church, that the colours of the silk vestments (that is, of the chasuble, stole, maniple, dalmatic, tunicle, humeral veil, cope) vary according to the feast or occasion on which they are used. The colours of the Latin rite are white, red, green, purple, black and rosy colour.²⁷ Cloth of gold may always take the place of white, red or green, not of purple or black. The General instruction asks to keep the traditional colours with regard to the liturgical seasons and days of celebration (GI. 308). At the same time, it permits the

26. J.P. Lang, *Dictionary of the Liturgy*, (New York, 1976), 98-99; Pathikulangara, *Qurbana*, 63.

27. For details about the occasions on which they are used see Fortescue, *Ceremonies*, 14-15.

conference of bishops to “determine adaptations in the form of vestments which correspond to the needs and usages of their regions and propose these to the Apostolic See” (GI. 304)²⁸ The “12 points of adaptation” proposes to use “vestments as single tunic-type chausable with stole (*angavastra*)” (no. 7), instead of the other vestments.²⁹

The most important altar vessels are normally paten and chalice. There are various instruments and clothes, used along with these in the celebration of the Eucharist in different traditions. In the East Syriac tradition *Soseppa*, square shaped linen, is made out of the same stuff as that of the *Paina*. It is big enough to cover the paten and chalice together. The *Soseppa* is the representation of the covering stone of the sepulcher of our Lord. At the commencement of the *Quddasa* the celebrant folds the *Soseppa* and places it around the holy gifts. Here the *soseppa* turns out to be the napkin, which was on the head of our Lord when he was buried. The folded *soseppa* declares that the Mystery of the Risen Lord is being perfected on the altar. At the end of the Rite of Reconciliation in the *Qurbana*, the *soseppa* is unfolded again by the celebrant.

It appears to be an action declaring that the Sacred Mysteries are perfected and the faithful are welcome to receive them.³⁰ Syro-Malabar Church also uses the *Mqablana*, *Sangeennju*, and hand Towel, in the *Qurbana*.

The paten in the West Syrian Church is rather like a round dish about seven inches in diameter and approximately one inch deep.³¹ There are also elements like star (*kaukbo*), spoon (*tarwodho*) used to communicate those in Holy Orders, sponge (*espugo*) and sometimes a *Sangeennju* to clean the chalice, cushion (*gomuro*) to rest the spoon and used to wipe the fingers and mouth as well as to purify the paten after the use. In the West Syrian celebration, a large veil (*susopho*) is used for covering the offerings and the altar table (*tablith*). There is a solemn rite of waving and removing the *susopho* from above the gifts. Then the celebrant recites the following prayer, “You are the fiery rock, which sent forth twelve streams of water for the twelve tribes of Israel. You are the fiery rock, which was set against the tomb of our Redeemer”³² There are three veils used for the covering of the vessels in the liturgical celebration. One for the paten, one for the chalice, known as *huppaya*, and one to cover both chalice and paten and is called *annaphuro*.³³

28. There is a special mention about the concelebrated Mass in the General Instructions and norms are given for the same. For a good reason, as when there are more concelebrants than vestments, the chasuble. General Instruction on the Roman Missal (1970), *Instructions on the Revised Roman Rites*. (London, Collins Liturgical Publications, 1979 : 72-145), n. 161. (Cited further as G1).

29. *Statement of Facts on the First stage of Liturgical Indigenization (Commonly known as the points of Adaptations)* IPS, no. 10 (Bangalore : NBCLC, n.d.)

30. Pathikulangara, *Qurbana*, 198-99.

31. Day, *Eastern Christian Liturgies*, 158.

32. *The Divine Liturgy of the Syro-Malankara Church Trivandrum*, 1986), 27.

33. Day, *Eastern Christian Liturgies*, 158

The fans or *Marwah'tho* are most frequently used. This consists of metal discs modelled in the form of a seraph's face and wings; bells are usually attached to it and the whole is connected to a staff. Cymbals, together with the *noqusho* or tongueless bronze cup with handle, are struck by a metal rod at solemn parts of the liturgy, for example, at the *Sanctus*, Words of Institution, the Elevation and the Blessing of the people³⁴. The thurible has shorter chains than the latin version, and has bells attached. The thurible is always swung its entire length, unlike the standard practice in the West.

In the Byzantine tradition, the sacred vessels and instruments are the chalice (*poterion*) the paten (*diskos*), the lance, the star (or *asteriskos*), the spoon, and the *artophorion* or casket in which the Blessed Sacrament is reserved. The *diskos* may rest upon a foot. The lance is a little two-edged knife, the handle of which ends in a cross. This is used only in the Byzantine rite.

The star or *asterisk* (*asteriskos*) is a sort of cross of precious metal, made of two strips crossed one upon the other, fastened in the middle by a screw and ending in feet. The symbolism is recalled in the rites of the *prothesis* by the words of the Gospel: "And the star came and stood above where the child was". It is placed on the *diskos* so that its sides touch neither the principal host nor the other particles; the *asterisk* keeps all the altar-breads from contact with the

special veil (*diskokalymma*), which covers them.

In the Byzantine tradition, the spoon (*labis*) is made use by the priest when giving Communion to the faithful under both kinds.³⁵ The Sponge (*Mousa* or *Spongus*) is a small sponge of very fine texture which is used by the priest and the deacon to arrange particles of bread on the paten during the rite of the *prothesis*, to move from the paten into the chalice after the consecration. It is triangular shape, each side of the triangle being one or two inches in length. The symbolic meaning the liturgists give is that it represents the sponge which one of the soldiers took, filled it with vinegar, put it on a reed, and give Him to drink" (Mt 27 : 48).³⁶ The sponge does not exclude the use of a purificator, which is especially necessary for the sacred ministers for wiping the lips and for purifying the outer edges of the chalice after receiving the Precious Blood.

In the Byzantine rite also there are three veils (*Kalyammata*) used during the eucharistic celebration and serves the same purpose. The first veil used over the paten is known as *disko-kalymma*. The second veil (*deuteron kalymma*) is chalice veil and corresponds to the Latin pall, and the large veil, called simply *kalymma* protects the two small veils. According to the symbolism seen in the writings of St. Germanos of Constantinople, the chalice veil symbolizes the shroud, which wrapped

34. Day, *Eastern Christian Liturgies*, 160.

35. The spoon was introduced in the eighth century. In the present day, the use of the spoon is tending to disappear. Salaville, *Eastern Liturgies*, 143.

36. Salaville, *Eastern Liturgies*, 155-56

our Lord's body; the paten veil typifies the cloth which covered the Holy Face; and the large veil represents the stone which closed the entrance to the Holy Sepulchre.³⁷

The metal fans, used in Byzantine liturgy, are called *hexapteriga* or *rhypidia*. They are often carried as ornaments in processions by deacons, clerics or choir-boys, on either side of the book of the Gospel, or of the offerings for use in the Holy Sacrifice, or of the Blessed Sacrament itself.³⁸ The thurible used in the Syriac and Byzantine tradition (known as *thymiaterion* or *thymiatos*), has short chains (20-24 inches), and has bells attached.

In the Latin Rite the following cloths are used for a liturgical celebration : The Corporal, a square piece of linen spread on the altar during the mass. The Purificator, a linen cloth in three lengthwise, used as a handkerchief by the celebrating priest. The Pall a small square of linen, sometimes strengthened by a card, used to cover the chalice at Mass. The Towel is a small linen cloth, used to dry the hands after the washing at Mass.³⁹ Hand bells are used in the Latin liturgy, to remind faithful of the important moments of the mass. The Latin thurible has long chain and has no bells attached to it. " 12 points of adaptation" proposes to use tray for corporal (no.8), incense by bowl with a handle (no. 6) for thurible.

2.3 Sanctuary Veil and Iconostasis

There is a veil that encloses and to a certain extent hides the sanctuary from the people in most of the eastern traditions. This veil before the "Holy of Holies", the throne of God, emphasizes the aspect of mystery, and is against the idea of "gazing at the Lord", as is the case in the Roman tradition. In the words of Robert Taft, "For the Easterners, devotion is aroused by concealment as well as by exposition, and the doors and the veils or the *iconostasis* are not only to hide, but also to reveal. Understood in this way, the icon is seen as a tangible witness to the mystery we live in the liturgy. It is not a barrier but a symbolic gateway into the kingdom of heaven, presented here below in mystery."⁴⁰

In the East Syriac church, there is an opaque veil, which separates the sanctuary from other parts of the church. Generally, the sanctuary is kept veiled. This brings to our mind the real nature of heaven, which is beyond human perception. At the appointed times during liturgy, the veil is drawn aside. According to the prescriptions of the liturgical books, at least during the celebration of the Solemn and Most Solemn forms of the *Qurbana*, the sanctuary veil is to be used.⁴¹

37. Salaville, *Eastern Liturgies*, 156-57

38. Salaville, *Eastern Liturgies*, 148-49

39. Fortescue, *Ceremonies*, 14.

40. Robert Taft, *Beyond East and West- Problems in Liturgical Understanding* (Washington : Paulist Press, 1984), 122.

41. Pathikulangara, *Qurbana*, 138-39.

In the West Syriac, there is a curtain or veil drawn around the altar during certain parts of the liturgy or when the altar is not in use. In the Syriac churches, there are no interior decorations and there are no pictures seen in the church.⁴²

In the Byzantine Tradition, in every Church, there is an *iconostasis*, the wall of paintings, which separates the sanctuary from the nave. In the words of Dom Henri Leclercq, "In our own days the *iconostasis* continues to divide every church in which the Orthodox Eastern rite is celebrated, into two parts, thus separating the clergy from the faithful... This complete enclosure is set up at the entrance of the choir, which it altogether cuts off from view, for being exceedingly lofty, it scarcely allows one to catch a glimpse."⁴³ In that wall of paintings, the icons of Christ, Mary, angels and Saints are placed.⁴⁴ Salaville speaks about the paintings on the *iconostasis*, "Little by little, the *iconostasis* came to monopolize almost completely, so as to be entirely overloaded with them, the paintings which had formerly been evenly distributed on the walls and vaulting. At the present day, full-sized *iconostases* have four or five superimposed rows of icons"⁴⁵

On *iconostasis*, there are three doors separating the sanctuary from the west end of the church.⁴⁶ In the centre is the *royal* (alternatively called *holy* or *beautiful*) door, reserved to the bishops and officiating priests. Deacons may only pass through it on rare and especially solemn occasions in the course of their ministry. On the right (the position of a person looking towards the altar, also known as the South door), is the *diaconal* door, reserved to the deacon. On the left is the ordinary door, used by the lesser clergy.⁴⁷

In the Byzantine churches men skilled in painting and mosaics set up in the canopies of their cupolas, and along the walls of their basilicas, the glittering pages of their monumental catechism⁴⁸. Salaville speaks about the decorations in an Eastern church, especially a Byzantine church, "As early as the end of the fourth century and the beginning of the fifth, Biblical history was represented in the East by the use of paintings on the walls of the churches, and by miniatures in manuscripts. In the churches, more particularly, a double cycle came into being- a *narrative* cycle which surveyed with some attempt at chronological order the chief events of the

42. Day, *Eastern Christian Liturgies*, 158

43. *Dictionnaire d'archeologie chretienne et de liturgie*, art . "Iconostase", vol. Vii, 1925, col. 31. See. Salaville, *Eastern Liturgies*, 107.

44. Ernst Benz, *The Eastern Orthodox Church. Its Thought and Life*. trans. Richard and Clara Winston, (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1963), 2.

45. Salaville, *Eastern Liturgies*, 130-31.

46. Day, *Eastern Christian Liturgies*, 2.

47. Salaville, *Eastern Liturgies*, 111.

48. Salaville, *Eastern Liturgies*, 115.

Old and New Testaments, and a liturgical cycle which adapted the artists' work to the succession of feasts in the calendar"⁴⁹.

In the Latin tradition, there is no veil or *iconostasis* used in the church in front of the sanctuary. The images of Christ, Mary and the saints are venerated in churches (Gl. 278). In the Gothic or Roman cathedrals, statues and stained glass works were most commonly used.

2.4 Mode of celebration of liturgy

The liturgical celebration in a church, known in different names as *Qurbana*, *Qurbano*, Divine Liturgy or Mass is generally classified into two categories. They are the simple or the low Mass and the solemn or the High Mass. In the Syro-Malabar Church, the most solemn form of the *Qurbana* is known as *Raza*, the perfect form of celebration in this liturgical tradition.⁵⁰ In any Church, either of the Eastern or of the Western tradition, High Mass (Solemn *Qurbana*) is the ideal and the historically original form of celebration. The simple mass (Low Mass) is really only a shortened form of the celebration⁵¹.

In the East Syriac *Qurbana*, the *G'hantha* prayers are to be said by the celebrant, with

a slight inclination of the head, folded hands, and in a voice low yet audible to the community⁵². In the church of the East, as in the other Eastern Churches, there are three kinds of special prayers known as *Qanona*, *Kushapa* and *G'hantha*. The *Qanona* is said aloud, while the priest stands and stretches forth his hand above his head. *Kushapa* is said silently while kneeling. *G'hantha* is said inclining, in voice that can be heard only in the altar⁵³. The Syriac liturgy is always a sung liturgy. Even if the liturgy is not solemn, the celebrant, with the exception of some silent prayers, recites or sings all the prayers aloud. In solemn liturgies, he is surrounded by several officiating deacons, subdeacons, readers, and singers, all wearing special liturgical vestments, who place themselves on both sides of the altar servicing divine mysteries.⁵⁴

The Byzantine liturgy is also fully sung. The Latin distinction between said and sung celebrations is unknown to the Byzantine Church. Participation in worship means joining in the singing and saying of hymns and prayers⁵⁵. There is no time that is kept in silence.

At the Latin High Mass, the celebrant uses three tones for the recitation of the prayers, i.e., some parts are sung or said in

49. Salaville, *Eastern Liturgies*, 116-17.

50. Pathikulangara, *Qurbana*, vii.

51. Fortescue, *Ceremonies*, 41.

52. *The Order of the Solemn Raza of the Syro-Malabar Church*. (Trivandrum, 1986), 3, General Instructions, n.12.

53. Mar Aprem, *Sacraments of the Church of the East*, 58.

54. Gheevarghese Panicker, "Liturgy of St. James and Theology of the Trinity". *Studia Liturgica* 30,1 (2000), 120.

55. Wybrew, *The Orthodox Liturgy*, 5.

a loud voice, while some are said in a submissive voice, and still others silently. In the concelebrated Mass, the parts said by the concelebrants together are to be recited in a low voice and in such a way that voice of the celebrant is clearly heard by all the people; who should be able to understand the texts easily. While saying the words of the Lord, at the Institution Narrative, each celebrant extends his right hand towards the bread and towards the chalice; if this seems opportune. The intercessions may be assigned to one or other of the concelebrants, who alone says the prayers aloud, with hands extended (*Gl* 170, 174. c, 175).

2.5 Use of Incense

Incensing is an indispensable element of public worship for Easterners. In the use of incense in the East Syriac *Qurbana* several symbolic meanings are involved. It is a symbol of supreme adoration or submission of the whole creation to the Creator; the symbol of forgiveness of sins; and human prayer rising to God. Hence liturgy without incensing is a contradiction and naturally imperfect.⁵⁶ Incensing before altar, which is the throne of God in heaven, signifies the total surrender of the worshipping community to God and confessing his divinity and dominion over all. Incensing the faithful shows the remission of their sins and debts. A prayer for blessing the incense in the Anaphora of Addai and Mari expresses the symbolism

of incensing, "In the name of your most holy Trinity, may this incense which we offer in your honour be blessed so that it may be most pleasing to you, and obtain remission of the debts of the sheep of your flock, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for ever"⁵⁷

The occasions on which the incense is used, in the East Syriac *Qurbana*, are the following: (1) during the entrance procession, (2) at the beginning of *Lakhu Mara*, the deacon incenses the whole sanctuary with altar at its centre, the whole church and the faithful assembled there, (3) at the procession and proclamation of the gospel, (4) at the time of preparation to incense chalice and paten, (5) at the beginning of the Anaphora, to incense the offerings and altar, (6) before elevation to incense the priest, deacon, people, altar, body and blood.

In the West Syrian *Qurbano* the occasions in which incense is used are : (1) at the service of Penitence, after the preparation of gifts, there is a blessing of incense, (2) at the beginning of the public service of *Qurbano*, to incense the altar and the people, (3) at the proclamation of the gospel, (4) after *Proemions* (Preface), just before the creed, the celebrant blesses the censor with the prayer: "May we receive from God the remission of our debts and forgiveness of our sins for ever". The after prayers glorifying each person of the Trinity, the celebrant takes the thurible in

56. Pathikulangara, *Qurbana*, 58-59.

57. Solemn Raza, 14.

his hands and incenses the altar, the ministers, and the people, (5) the celebrant puts the incense after the words of Institution, (6) after the communion of the celebrant and the ministers there is a prayer of the incense.

In the Byzantine rite incense is used at the following times : (1) during entrance procession, (2) at the beginning of Mass, to incense the altar, (3) at the procession and proclamation of the gospel, (4) at the time of preparation to incense chalice and paten.

The Latin rite considers that incense is not part of the ordinary Mass, and it is considered as an additional element of solemnity. In the Latin rite the use of incense is optional in any form of the Mass. The occasions on which the incense is used are the following: (1) during the entrance procession, (2) at the beginning of Mass, to incense the altar, (3) at the procession and proclamation of the gospel, (4) at the offertory, to incense the offering, altar, priest, and people, (5) at the elevation of the host and chalice after the words of Institution. In the Latin rite celebrations both hands are used for incensation so that the left hand holds the chains and the right hand raises the thurible, in the East the right hand alone controls the whole movement of the censor.⁵⁸ There are many meanings given for the use of incense, in the Latin tradition,

It is a means of warding off evil spirits in all religions, as, for example, at burials and exorcisms. It also has been used to purify and expiate; as a sign of sacrifice and honour. Incense also has the same symbolic value as the cloud; the glory of the Lord is manifested by the cloud (Ex. 16:1)⁵⁹

2.6 Facing the East

In all the Eastern traditions, the Eucharistic liturgy is celebrated facing the East, from the early centuries. In the Syro-Malabar Church, *Qurbana* was celebrated facing the east. Facing the people position of the celebrant came into common use not more than thirty years ago.⁶⁰ This became a common practice in the Syro- Malabar Church, after (or along with) introducing 1968 *Qurbana*, for experiment, as a spontaneous development and it was suddenly put into common use in almost all churches, without any authorization.⁶¹ The Synod of bishops in their meeting in 15-20, November 1999 decided to introduce the east-ward facing position of the *Qurbana* from the time of the rite of presentation of the gifts to the Communion, which was to come into force on July 3, 2000. In some dioceses, this decision is not implemented. The eastward facing position is used all through out the celebration of the liturgy, except for readings, blessings, giving Eucharistic

58. Salaville, *Eastern Liturgies*, 147.

59. Emminghaus, *The Eucharist*, 111.

60. Antony Nariculam, *New Directives on the Syro-Malabar Liturgy : A Study*, (Alwaye: STAR Publications, n.12,1988), 18-19.

61. Final Judgement of the S. Congregation for the Oriental Churches concerning the Order of the Syro-Malabar *Qurbana* (July 24, 1985), n.40 a.

communion, in all the West Syrian churches.

The traditional practice in the Byzantine Church was that the celebrant stands at the west side of the altar, facing east, leading the people in prayer. It is clear that this must have been the case in Constantinople in the fifth century.⁶² According to the symbolic interpretation given by Germanos I, Patriarch of Constantinople (715-730), in *Ecclesiastical History*, Prayer is made towards the east because the comprehensible sun of righteousness, Christ our God, appeared on earth in those regions of the east where the perceptible sun rises⁶³

Facing the East is a universally accepted position for prayer in the liturgical tradition of the East. It is an accepted fact that ever since the ancient times, it has been customary in the Eastern Churches to turn towards the East, to prostrate oneself to the ground, turning towards the East.⁶⁴ The Church buildings were constructed in such a way that altar would face the West, and the people while facing the altar, face the East in their prayer. Fathers like St. Ephrem, Tertullian and John of Damascus also give witness to this tradition. John of Damascus writes, "The Lord placed on the cross looked toward the west, and so we prostrate ourselves in his direction, facing him. When he ascended to heaven, he was

raised toward the east, and thus his disciples adored him, and thus he will return, in the same way as they saw him go to heaven (Cf. Acts 1:11), as the Lord himself said, "For just as lightening comes from the East and is seen afar the West, so will the coming of the Son of Man be" (Mt. 24:27). Waiting for him, we prostrate ourselves toward the East. It is an unwritten tradition, deriving from the Apostles"⁶⁵.

Prayers said facing the eastward became, for Christians, an eschatological confession of the divinity of Jesus. It also shows that all are awaiting Christ as the Son of God "who will come again in glory"⁶⁶. This rich and fascinating interpretation also explains the reason for which the celebrant who presides in the liturgical celebration prays facing the East, just as the people who participate. The eastward position of the celebrant is also the position of guiding the people in pilgrimage toward the Kingdom, invoked in prayer until the return of the Lord. Thus, it signifies the pilgrim nature of the Church, as "a marching column of pilgrims"⁶⁷ the celebrant symbolizes the head, Christ, and the Eucharistic assembly follows.

Cardinal Ratzinger shows the importance of turning towards the East, quoting J.A. Jungmann, by alluding to the words of St. Augustine, "turned to the Lord" (*Conversi ad Dominum*). It also gives

62. Wybrew, *The Orthodox Liturgy*, 55.

63. Wybrew, *The Orthodox Liturgy*, 124.

64. Instruction for Applying the Liturgical Prescriptions, n. 107, Joseph Ratzinger, *The Feast of Faith-An Approach to a Theology of Liturgy*, trans. G. Harrison, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 149-155; George Nedungatt, "Syro-Malabar Liturgical Reform in Focus", *Vidyajyothi* LIII, 5 (1989), 253; Klaus Gamber, "Mass *versus populum*" re-examined." *Theology Digest* XXII, 2 (1974), 154.

65. John of Damascus, *Expositio accurata fidei orthodoxae* IV, 12; PG 94, 1133-1136, Instruction for Applying the Liturgical Prescriptions, n. 107.

66. Emminghaus, *The Eucharist*, 49.

67. Nedungatt, "Liturgical Reform", 256.

a cosmic dimension to the Eucharist, present through liturgical gesture. Because of the rising sun, the east (*Oriens*) was naturally both a symbol of the Resurrection and a presentation of the hope of the *Parousia*.⁶⁸ The Eucharist is interpreted in terms of the Resurrection and Trinitarian theology, in terms of the *Parousia*, a theology of hope, in which every *Qurbana* is an approach to the return of Christ.

Eastward facing position was in recent times wrongly described as praying "towards the holy of holies"⁶⁹ "the priest turning his back on the people" "facing the wall" or as "facing the altar". In the words of Cardinal Ratzinger, one of the main reasons for the sweeping triumph of the new celebration facing the people, a change which has taken place with amazing unanimity and speed, without any mandate, is the losing of the awareness of the cosmic orientation, since the nineteenth century, and a prior loss of the meaning from within.⁷⁰

In the Latin Church also it was a very old Christian principle that people turn to the east at prayer, so the priest saying Mass also should face east.⁷¹ The eastward-facing position of prayer, making the cosmos a sign of Christ, according to E. Peterson and J.A. Jungmann, was underlined very early on by the custom of placing a cross on the

east wall of the Christian meeting houses⁷² and in churches. Instead of the cross on the wall, the cross was later put on the altar as "a relic of the ancient eastward orientation"⁷³. According to Cardinal Ratzinger, First this was seen as a sign of the returning Christ; later it became more and more a reminder of the Lord's historical Passion, and finally, the eschatological idea disappeared almost entirely from the image of the cross⁷⁴.

Facing the people position of the celebrant was authorized in the Latin rite, before the end of the Vatican Council II, even though it did not say anything about the position of the celebrant during the Mass. But it suddenly appeared in the West, in the name of liturgical adaptation. Instruction on the Proper Implementation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (September 26, 1964) reads, "it is lawful to celebrate Mass facing the people" (n. 95). In the present Latin tradition, the Mass is celebrated facing the people, from beginning to the end.

2.7. Role of Deacon

Deacon plays an active role in the celebration of the Eucharist in any eastern Church. There will be two deacons assisting the *Qurbana*. In the East Syriac *Qurbana* the proclamations are done by the deacon. Before the prayer by the celebrant the

68. Ratzinger, *Feast of Faith*, 140.

69. Since the Lord is present in the eucharistic gifts during the Mass in the same way as he is in the gifts of the tabernacle which come from the Mass, it is theologically meaningless to celebrate Eucharist "from" the Host "to" the Host. Ratzinger, *Feast of Faith*, 140.

70. Ratzinger, *Feast of Faith*, 142.

71. Footnote no. 2 in Fortescue, *Ceremonies*, I.

72. Josef Andreas Jungmann, *The Early Liturgy*, ed. F.A. Burnor. (London : 1960), 137.

73. Ratzinger, *Feast of Faith*, 141.

74. Ratzinger, *Feast of Faith*, 140

deacon reminds the faithful of the importance of the following prayer by saying, "Let us pray: peace be with us." It is the deacon, who reads the epistle, whereas the first and second readings are done by lectors. After the Gospel proclamation by the celebrant, one deacon proclaims the *Karozutha*. At this time, the archdeacon prepares the chalice and paten in the *Raza*, whereas in the solemn *Qurbana* this is done by the deacon. In the *Raza*, after the dismissal of the catechumens, the deacon goes to the southern *beth gazza* takes the chalice, raises it to the forehead and carries it to the middle of the altar and hands it over to the archdeacon. In the Church of the East, Eucharist cannot be celebrated without a deacon or another priest to assist the celebrant. It is the role of the deacon to prepare the chalice, and the priest prepares the bread. During communion, the bread is given to the faithful by the celebrant, while the cup is offered by the deacon. This rule is a special feature observed only among the Nestorians.⁷⁵

In the Byzantine rite, deacon establishes communication between the priest and the faithful.⁷⁶ The deacon at the head of the congregation before the central doors of the *iconastasis*, forms a bridge between the people and the holy of holies, a body standing before men, but a mind knocking at the gates of heaven through prayer, in the lively image of St. John Climacus.⁷⁷ The deacon also represents the angel. At the

moment when the deacon is carrying out his most characteristic functions, he holds the front end of the *orarion* (stole) raised a little, almost at the height of his face, in the three fingers of the right hand, with a gesture that betokens an invitation to prayer. This is done sometimes to warn the faithful regarding the moment of prayer, sometimes to remind the priest that the moment has come to perform such and such detail of the sacred rites.⁷⁸ Before communicating, the deacon passes his stole in the manner of a girdle a little below the breast, brings it round over the shoulders and crosses it in the middle of the back, and then crosses it again on the breast, fixing the ends under the part arranged as a girdle. He thus represents the seraphim, veiling their faces with their wings when they approach the throne of God, and indicates at the same time the sentiments of fear, compunction and devotion, which should inspire him at this solemn moment.⁷⁹

The role of the deacon is to help the celebrant in the Latin mass. The proclamations are done by the celebrant in the Latin Mass, and only rarely by the deacon. Usually there is only one deacon who serves at the Mass, while other ministers are subdeacon, acolytes and others who help the celebrant. The specific functions of a deacon can be seen only in the High Mass. It is the deacon, who sings the gospel. According to the ancient tradition, the book of lessons is handed over to the subdeacon,

75. Mar Aprem *Sacraments of the Church of the East*, 59

76. Yves Congar, *Diversity and Communion*. trans. Bowden, (London : SCM Press, 1984), 72.

77. P. Hammond, *The Master of Marah, The Present State of Greek Church*, (London : Rockliff, 1984), 36.

78. Salaville, *Eastern Liturgies*, 181-82.

79. Salaville, *Eastern Liturgies*, 182-83.

who holds it and opens it before his breast at a convenient height, and the deacon sings from it. However, in the revised Roman missal, the Gospel is proclaimed at a lectern.

After creed, the deacon spreads the corporal before the altar cross. At the altar, he takes the paten and chalice from the subdeacon, who brings them, prepares bread and wine in them; hands them over to the celebrant. During the canon, the deacon stands at the celebrant's left, by the missal, points out the places and turns the pages. He receives peace from the celebrant, the deacon takes the paten and holds it, near the celebrant, while the Communion is given to the faithful. According to the General Instruction, he also leads the general intercessions of the faithful (Gl. 61).

Conclusion

Liturgy, as the celebration of faith of the community, is always a communitarian celebration. The priest, who leads the community, along with other ministers and the faithful, celebrate the sacred mysteries together. A private liturgy, offered by a priest, without a minister and / or a community, is not in the true spirit. Liturgical celebration, in any tradition, is to be a solemn celebration, by the very nature of the liturgy. It is actually a participation in and reenactment of the heavenly liturgy here on earth, with signs and symbols, in a liturgical space time. The proper and meaningful celebration, according to the nature and tradition of a particular Church, will always lead the participants, as a community, into the experience of the heavenly realities. Thus, liturgy becomes the most sublime act in the life of a Christian, who is on a pilgrimage, towards his Creator.

Traditional things are losing value in the modern scientifically and technologically advanced age. Man is busy with lot of things to do in his day-to-day life. However, traditional liturgy, with its rich symbolic meaning and theological understanding, would only help the modern man to attain new heights in experiencing God. What all things we do or say for the sake of convenience or for pleasing others, if it is not corresponding to truth and the eternal values, will not give a lasting solution. Celebration of liturgy is not to be done according to the convenience of the celebrant or the community, but primarily according to the tradition and teaching of the *sui iuris* Church.

By advocating for the preservation and continuation of the traditional liturgy, one is in no way trying to devalue adaptation and renewal in the liturgical sphere. In fact, Vatican II opened up a new path for the renewal of liturgy. At the same time, the General Instruction on the Roman Missal (1970) clearly states that there is an ardent attempt made to reinstate the traditional and meaningful celebrations, which are lost in the course of the centuries. Tradition of one church may be different from another, in many respects. Difference in a practice or meaning of symbolism in different traditions need not lead one to doubt their validity or authenticity. A particular aspect of a celebration in another tradition may be more appealing. This need not prompt one to copy from the other. Each tradition is different because of its historical reasons of development and theological understanding. Accepting the one as it is and trying not to imitate the other is a real challenge. The Church also faces this challenge at this time of the cry for adaptation and renewal.

EUGENE CARDINAL TISSERANT AND EASTERN CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA

-Xavier Koodapuzha

1. Introduction

In a solemn gathering held on 26th November 2002, at St Thomas Mount, the headquarters of the Syro-Malabar Church, Eugene Cardinal Tisserant was officially commemorated in connection with the 30th anniversary of his death. This author was requested to present the commemorative lecture on that occasion. I consider it an obligation and privilege to bring to the attention of the new generation the unique role of the prophetic leadership played by Eugene Cardinal Tisserant in the process of recovering the ecclesial heritage and identity of the Eastern Christianity in India. The awareness of the eastern identity of the Oriental Churches in India made them conscious of the equality of the rights and obligations of the individual Churches within the Catholic Church. It was the beginning of a clear departure from a set up, which happened to prevail in India from the time of western colonialism.

H. E. Eugene Cardinal Tisserant was the head of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches from 1936-1959. As I had many opportunities to associate with Cardinal Tisserant during my studies in Rome from 1955 to 1964 and to be a witness of some of his very important decisions which paved

the way to farreaching positive results in the Church in India, I am deeply convinced of the importance of the unique role played by this outstanding dignitary of the Catholic Church.

The Eastern Christianity in India, especially the Syro-Malabar Chrch, is indebted to Cardinal Tisserant for his great contribution in the missionary, pastoral, ecumenical, liturgical, Religious and clerical formation fields. The period of Cardinal Tisserant was indeed a turning point in the history of the Oriental Catholic Churches in India. His impressive figure and thought-provoking words are still vivid in my memory. His great respect and commitment to and concern for the Oriental heritage did really qualify him to occupy the important office of the head of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches for a relatively long period. In this context we cannot forget the great role played by Fr. Placid J. Podipara, who was his secretary during the visit to India and later Consulter to the Congregation for the Oriental Churches and member of the various Pontifical Commissions and Committees.

We are indebted to Cardinal Tisserant for his profound scholarship and

foresight and enlightened leadership. We owe him for what he has done and for what he was to our Church in India. His love and concern for us echoed in his words "*I love your Church, because I know your history*". He knew well the historical background, problems and prospects of the Eastern Christianity in Asia, especially in India.

Bio-data of Eugene Cardinal Tisserant:

The bio-data of Cardinal Tisserant unveils to us the multi-dimensional aspects of the service he has rendered to the Church and society.

Born at Nancy in France on 24th March 1884

Education: Nancy, Seminary of Nancy, Catholic Institute of Paris, and Biblical Institute, Jerusalem.

Priestly Ordination: August 4, 1907

Faculty Member of the Pontifical Roman Athenaeum of St Pollinate and curator at Vatican Library, 1908-1914.

Assistant Librarian in Vatican Library 1919-1930

Pro-Prefect of Vatican Library: November 15, 1930

Cardinal: Cardinal Deacon: June 15, 1936

Secretary of the S. Congregation for the Oriental Church: June 19, 1936

Episcopal Ordination by Eugenio Pacelli, Secretary of state (Pope Pius XII): July 25, 1937

President of Pontifical Biblical Commission: June 11, 1938

Bishop Cardinal: See of Portò S. Ruffian: February 18, 1946

Vice Dean of the College of Cardinal: February 21, 1948

Dean of the College of Cardinals: Suburbicarian Bishop of Ostia: January 13, 1951

Prefect of the Congregation for Ceremonial: March 10, 1951

Official Visit to Kerala: November-December 1953 & Episcopal Ordination of Mar J. Parecatil

Episcopal Ordination to Giovanni Montini (Pope Paul VI) Sep. 12, 1954

Episcopal Ordination to Mar Sebastian Valloppilly: January 8, 1956

Librarian and Archivist of the Holy Roman Church: September 14, 1957

Resignation from the S. Oriental Congregating: November 11, 1959

Attended Vatican Council II and Member of the Presidency: 1962-1965

Member of the French Academy: June 23, 1962

Resigned as Librarian and Archivist: January 1, 1971

Death: February 21, 1972

2. Cardinal Tisserant: Liberator of the Orientals from the restricted Barriers

Cardinal Tisserant was well aware of the *raison d'être* of the Congregation for

the Oriental Churches. Pope Benedict's XV of Happy Memory, while establishing the Congregation for the Oriental Churches on 1st May 1917 by the *Motu Proprio* "*Dei Providentis*" defined the nature and goal of the Congregation. "*Would that some of our beloved sons from the Orient take it up as a divine precept to try and restore this glorious Church to its pristine prosperity and glory. We, on our part, being mindful of our duty, will do our best to redress their grievances as far as possible. Therefore we have decided to erect a special sacred Congregation for the Oriental Churches of which we ourselves and our successors shall be Prefect*".

The visit of Cardinal Tisserant during the months of November and December 1953 was a clarion call to the Eastern Christianity in India to become aware of their great heritage and unique mission in the Catholic Church. He visited Kerala and personally studied the anomalous situation and began to take decisive steps to normalize the strange situation by erecting the diocese of Tellicherry on 31 December 1953. A well-studied Memorandum was prepared and submitted to Cardinal Tisserant by Fr. Placid J. Podipara on 26th November 1953. It was a scientific analysis of the anomalous situation of the Syro-Malabar Church. It served as a solid and substantial source material and guideline not only to the Congregation for the Oriental Churches but also to the preparatory studies of the Vatican Council II in which Fr. Placid was especially appointed by the Holy See *a Peritus* (Expert). The memorandum contained the following topics. 1. Restoration and

Renewal of the Syro-Malabar liturgy. 2. A separate Seminary for the Syro-Malabar Church. 3. Extension of the Syro-Malabar territory. 4. Mission Territories for the Syro-Malabar Church. 5. Syro-Malabar Provinces for Latin Religious Congregations. 6. Reorganization of the Syro-Malabar Religious Congregations. 7. Need of co-operation of the Catholic dioceses in the educational field.

Students of ecclesiology and history of the Church are well aware that the Vatican Council II has rediscovered the true nature of the Catholic Church as the communion of the Churches. The Catholic Church is not a monolithic monarchical organization with a rigid uniformity. On the contrary it is the communion of different Churches, which are united, in the same faith, same sacraments and shepherded by a legitimate hierarchy. At the same time these Churches are different in their liturgy, spirituality, asceticism, theology, traditions, administrative system etc. (L G 23). The Council teaches that this variety in no way harms her unity but rather manifests it and that each Church should preserve their traditions whole and entire (OE 2). But the situation in India was not in harmony with the time-honoured principle of the Church.

a) The unjust Situation in India up to 1953

The following statistical data reveal the strange situation imposed on the Catholic Oriental Churches of India up to 1953:

Total area of India ...	3125944 sq. km
Total area of Kerala	38855 sq. km

Restricted area of the	
Syro-Malabar Church	12613 sq. km
Compared to the total	
Area of India	0. 47%
Missionaries of India from	
The Syro-Malabar Church	67%

b) Erection of the Eparchy of Tellicherry

As a scholar with the courage of conviction and the authority Cardinal Tisserant did do what was right without delay. He took immediate steps to extend the jurisdiction of the Syro-Malabar Church beyond the river Bharathapuzha. Cardinal Tisserant knew already that many Syro-Malabarians had migrated to the north beyond that river. He decided to visit personally the area. At that time there were about 74000 Syro-Malabar Catholics among the total number of 170,000 Catholics of the Latin diocese of Calicut. The Cardinal had received a Memorandum in the name of these Syro-Malabar emigrants in which it was stated that they were very happy and quite satisfied under the jurisdiction of the Latin Bishop of Calicut and that there was no need for a separate diocese for them. This Memorandum of the Oriental emigrants was an eye-opener to the sad situation and it convinced the Cardinal of the extent of the alienation of these Syro-Malabar emigrants from their own ecclesial heritage that they even dared to disown their own ecclesial patrimony.

Cardinal Tisserant was convinced of the need and urgency to assist the Oriental emigrants in the Diaspora and foresaw the bright prospects of the Church if they are properly assisted with pastors of their own Church. He personally visited Tellicherry to find out a suitable place for the bishop's house of the future diocese. Decision was taken without delay. It is said that the Cardinal personally interviewed Fr. Sebastian Valloppilly the future bishop. Pope Pius XII established the eparchy of Tellicherry by the Bull "*Ad Ecclesiam Regendam*" on 31 December 1953 and Fr. Sebastian Valloppilly was made its Administrator.

The timely intervention of Cardinal Tisserant proved prophetic. The new eparchy of the emigrants grew rapidly under the self-effacing and efficient pastoral leadership of the new Bishop Sebastian Valloppilly. The eparchy was bifurcated and Pope Paul VI erected the diocese of *Mananthavady* on March 1, 1973 by the Bull "*Quanta Gloria*". This new eparchy comprises the Wynad district of Kerala, Nilgris district of Tamilnadu and the districts of Shimoga, Chickmangalore Hassan, Mandhya and Mysore of Karnataka. It was followed by the erection of the diocese of *Thamarasserry* on 28th April 1986 by the Papal Bull *Constat non-Modo* of Pope Paul VI. This new diocese comprised the revenue districts of Calicut and Malappuram within the eparchy of Tellicherry. Tellicherry was made an archdiocese in 1995. It was bifurcated a third time for the creation of the new diocese of Balthangady on 26th May 1999.

It consists of the civil districts of Canara, Uduppi, and Curg in South Karnataka. The extension of the jurisdiction of the Syro-Malabarians proved a great success and the establishment of the new ecclesiastical province of Tellicherry is its valid proof.

c) Pastoral Care of the Oriental Catholic Emigrants

Though the Church of the Thomas Christians is as old as Christianity itself and enjoyed all-India jurisdiction ever since the arrival of the Portuguese in India they began to be territorially restricted and confined. Finally in 1887 when they were separated from the Latin jurisdiction the territory within the two rivers of Kerala, *Pampa* in the south and *Bharathapuzha* in the north became the boundaries of their jurisdiction. Fr Placid, the secretary and guide of Cardinal Tisserant during his visit to Kerala in 1953 narrates an interesting and thought-provoking incident during their journey to the south of Kerala.

"On our journey to the south, we crossed the Pampa River up to which the Oriental jurisdiction has then been restricted. I told the cardinal: "This is the river Pampa which is so deep that the Syro-Malabarians cannot cross it". The Cardinal understood what I had in my mind and replied: "I know that". He knew the fact and also that the situation was anomalous and unjust and had decided to rectify it. Most of the Thomas Christians lived in the States of Travancore and Cochin. I told him that in the capital of the State of Travancore they were foreigners because they were not

given jurisdiction to the south beyond the Pampa River. This fact touched him deeply and pained him" (Placid J. Podipara CMI, Eugene Cardinal Tisserant-Reminiscence) *Christian Orient*, 1984, Vol. 2, p.53).

d} Extension of the Jurisdiction of Trichur and Changanacherry

As we have seen already the jurisdiction of the Syro-Malabar Church was confined to a very restricted area. The Congregation for the Oriental Churches under the leadership of Cardinal Tisserant submitted a report to Pope Pius XII on the pastoral situation of the Oriental Catholic emigrants in India. The Pope by the Bull "*Saepe Fideles*" of April 28, 1956 extended the territory of Trichur to the north and east, which included the civil district of Coimbatore. The diocese of Changanacherry was extended to the south, which included the districts of Quilon, Trivandrum and Kottar, by the document "*Multorum Fidelium*" of 29th April 1955. The boundary of the diocese of Tellicherry was further extended to the areas of the Latin dioceses of Mysore and Mangalore. By the Bull "*Suddistica Gens*" of 29th April 1955 the personal jurisdiction of the diocese of Kottayam was extended and made co-terminus with the extended areas of the Syro-Malabar dioceses in Kerala. Thus Cardinal Tisserant can rightly be called the person who broke the barriers and liberated the Syro-Malabar Church from its centuries old territorial captivity imposed on them during the colonial period. As a result of the territorial expansion pastoral and missionary activities were intensified and

it paved the way for the erection of the new Syro-Malabar diocese of Palakkad comprising the civil districts of Palakkad, Coimbatore and Periyar and Karur taluks of Tiruchirappally district. Similarly the archdiocese of Changanacherry was bifurcated again to erect in the Tamilnadu area, the new diocese of Thuckalay on December 18, 1996.

3. Cardinal Tisserant: Forerunner of Vatican Council II

Cardinal Tisserant was deeply impressed by the missionary potentials and prospects of the Syro-Malabar Church and was eager to open mission territories to them. Preparations had begun by the Cardinal by collecting the necessary data. He was equally conscious of the possibilities of evangelization through emigrants. As the mission territories were under the Latin bishops who were appointed by the Congregation of Propaganda Fide he wrote letters to some of the Latin bishops under whom there were a large number of Syro-Malabar emigrants. The replies from the Latin bishops were not generally in favour of granting separate jurisdiction for the Orientals. The erection of the diocese of Tellicherry proved itself a great success. Though Cardinal Tisserant was transferred from the Oriental Congregation in 1959 he had already done the remote preparation for the erection of the Chanda mission. Thus on 31st March 1962, seven months before the Vatican Council II, by the apostolic Decree "*Sancti Evangelii*", the ecclesiastical unit of Chanda was erected

detaching three civil districts from the archdiocese of Nagpur. Chanda grew into an exarchate in 1968 and became a diocese in 1977. At present there are fourteen Syro-Malabar dioceses in Kerala and twelve outside including the St Thomas Syro-Malabar diocese of Chicago in U.S.A. Cardinal Tisserant had already set the scene long before the Vatican Council II.

The nos 3 & 4 of the Decree on the *Oriental Churches* of Vatican Council II on the equality of the rights and obligations of the Individual Churches for evangelisation and pastoral care were formulated to remedy the unjust situation in India where the Syro-Malabar Church was denied of the above-mentioned rights. Such an unjust situation prevailed also in the pastoral field. The Vatican Council II explicitly declared the equality of the Churches within the Catholic communion by deciding that they are of equal dignity endowed with the same rights and obligations for evangelisation and pastoral care..

"They (Churches) are consequently of equal dignity, so that none of them is superior to the others by reason of rite. They enjoy the same rights and are under the same obligations, even with respect to preaching the gospel to the whole world (Mk 16:15) under the guidance of the Roman Pontiff" (OE 3).

Theologians of Vatican Council II have not failed to point out the anomalous situation in India, which was the real context of the formulation of OE 3.

Johannes Hoeck:

"The real reason why the right to preach the gospel, that is, the right to engage in missionary activity, is especially mentioned among the rights and obligations of all the individual Churches is to be traced to the situation in India, where the Malabar Church, which has large surplus of priests, was until recently only permitted to convert people to the Latin rite" (Johannes Hoeck, "Decree on the eastern Catholic Churches" in the Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II, Vol. I, Ed, Herbert Vorgrimler, Burns & Oates/Herder and Herder, London, 1969, p. 315).

Victor Pospishil comments on the background of OE 3 and points out its result in the Indian context.

VICTOR POSPISHIL :

"However the situation is different for the flourishing Catholics of the two Syrian rites in South India, in the State of Kerala. The Malankarians and Malabarians, Christians of the West Syrian and of the East Syrian (Chaldean) rite respectively, whose claim to have been converted by the Apostle Thomas himself, although sounding improbable, cannot be easily rejected, were not permitted to extend their missionary activity to their pagan Indian brothers because the territory had been assigned to the Latin rite missions, which rite after all reached back that part of the globe hardly a few hundred years. This was considered not only unjust but also short-sighted because the Malabar Church is going through a period of awakening of

priestly and religious vocations of unheard of proportions. In addition, being denizens of India so much longer than the Latin rite Church, the Syrian rites are not contaminated by the European background of so many Latin rite missions. Now it is permitted to them and to other eastern rite Catholics to propagate the faith in their rite, of course under the direction of the Roman Pontiff in whom all missionary endeavours are centred" (Victor J. Pospishil, *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, The Decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches of the II Council of Vatican, New York, 1965, pp. 13-14).

Walter M. Abbott:

"By stressing the equal dignity of the different Catholic rites, the Council condemns clearly the theory of those who, mostly in the 18th century, taught that the Roman Rite enjoyed some kind of precedence over the others. In the past, the apostolate in the missions has been conducted exclusively in the Latin rite. This practice has been resented by some Easterners mostly in India, where the priests of the ancient Malabar rite were always obliged to adopt the Roman rite to undertake the missionary apostolate" (Walter M. Abbott, ed., *The Documents of Vatican II*, (Geoffrey-Chapman, London-Dublin), 1966, p. 374, foot-note, No. 7).

The No. 4 of the Decree on the Oriental Churches establishes the right and obligation of the Oriental Churches to provide pastoral care to their faithful

everywhere in the world (*unique terrarum*) without any territorial restriction.

"Therefore, attention should everywhere be given to the preservation and growth of each individual Church. For this purpose, parishes and a special hierarchy should be established for each where the spiritual good of the faithful so demands" (OE 4).

The commentators of the above-mentioned texts confirm the fact that the decision taken by Cardinal Tisserant eleven years in advance fully reflects the mind of Vatican Council II. The deep insight, vision and foresight of Cardinal Tisserant became obvious in the erection of the new diocese of Tellicherry for the Oriental emigrants and the extension of the territories of the eparchies of Trichur and Changanacherry much before the decision of Vatican II.

4. Cardinal Tisserant and the Syro-Malabar Liturgy

As the liturgy is the summit (SC 10) and centre of the life of the Church the Holy See showed great concern for the restoration and renewal of the liturgy of the Syro-Malabar Church. Uniformity with the Roman liturgy was considered for a long time the sign of orthodoxy and catholicity. But from the time of Pope Leo XIII the tide had turned for a better understanding and appreciation of the eastern liturgical heritage. The publication of the encyclical "*Orientalium Dignitas*" was the result of such a new awareness. Twentieth century marked the beginning of a series of studies on the authentic

liturgical sources of the Church, which provided a solid background for the liturgical renewal. It developed into a great movement in the Church.

It was quite natural that an Oriental Church which continued under the jurisdiction of the Latin bishops for centuries (1599-1896) would identify them with the Latin tradition. There were repeated attempts from the part of the Syro-Malabar bishops to the Holy See requesting permission to use the Latin Pontifical translated into Syriac. Similarly the text of the sacraments of the Latin rite also was translated into Syriac and began to be used by them. The extent of the latinization of the hierarchical leadership became quite evident to Rome. It was in this context Pope Pius XI assembled Plenary Council of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches and appointed a Pontifical Commission to study the original sources of the Syriac Pontifical. Pope categorically asserted that the Catholic Church does not want any kind of latinizations and the true spirit of catholicity should be promoted at all cost. The Pope prescribed the following guideline that the Orientals should never be Latinized and that half measures are neither generous nor fruitful: "*nefas est promovere apud Orientales latinismum: Sancta Sedes non-vult latinizare sed catholicizare; media partialia non-sunt neque generosa neque fructuosa*".

In 1936 Cardinal Tisserant was appointed the head of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches. He followed up the policy of the Holy See and the work of the Pontifical Commission. The members of

the Commission could feel the keen interest of the Cardinal that he had fixed a weekly session with them to assess the progress of their work. Cardinal Tisserant was a source of inspiration for the effective functioning of the Liturgical Commission. Meanwhile as the head of the Congregation he did not fail to share the timely information with the Oriental Catholic hierarchy the fruits of the studies of the Commission and give effective guideline to qualify their clergy, Religious and laity. Finally, Pope Pius XII officially approved the Pontifical for conferring S. Orders of the Syro-Malabar Church. "*Liber Officiorum Pontificalium secundum usum Ecclesiae Syrorum Orientalium*" on 26th June 1957. Subsequently Pope John XXIII confirmed the complete Syriac texts of the three anaphorae of the Syro-Malabar Holy Qurbana. It was made available in 1958. The Syriac text of the anaphora of Addai and Mari was published from Alwaye in 1960. The "*Supplementum Mysteriorum*" was also published in 1959. The Syriac text of the Liturgy of the Hours was already published in three volumes from Rome in 1938. The effective guidance and scholarship of Cardinal Tisserant is evident in the restoration and renewal of the Syro-Malabar liturgy.

5. Cardinal Tisserant and clerical Formation

It is a primary principle that the leadership should emerge from within the community imbibing its heritage, identity, ideals and aspirations. The leaders should never be alien to the identity, heritage,

history, mission and traditions of the community they preside over. In the case of the Thomas Christians the bishops and Religious of the Latin rite who ruled over them from 1599 were ignorant of the heritage and traditions of the local community tried to conform the clergy and Religious to the Western Latin tradition. The indigenous system of clerical formation known as *Malpanates* was discouraged and was finally altogether suppressed towards the end of the nineteenth century entrusting it exclusively to the Latin seminaries. Though an individual Church is to be distinguished by its liturgy, spirituality, discipline, theology, traditions, administrative system, feasts, fasts, liturgical calendar, devotions, ascetic practices, etc. the Church of the Thomas Christians was systematically and consistently alienated from them and conformed to the Latin traditions. Moreover a mentality was created especially among the clergy and Religious to look down upon the Oriental heritage and identity and look upon the western Latin practices as progressive and modern! Such an anomalous clerical attitude may be called a kind of neo-colonialism, which advocates an alien system under the indigenous leadership! The Syro-Malabar clergy, Religious and hierarchy formed after the Latin pattern felt quite comfortable in such an anomalous situation. The inability of an ancient Church to impart adequate ecclesial formation to its own clergy was not a credit to the Syro-Malabar Church and its leadership. As an eminent historian and theologian Fr. Placid J. Podipara began to

invite the attention of the community by his scholarly articles and books on the sad situation of the rich heritage of the Church of the Thomas Christians.

The unique role of Cardinal Tisserant in the field of clerical and Religious formation of the Syro-Malabar Church is really prophetic. Though the Syro-Malabar Church had already got its own indigenous bishops from 1896 the clerical formation continued exclusively under the Latin clergy. Such an anomalous situation was not helpful to protect and promote their own ecclesial identity and venerable heritage of an ancient Eastern Church. Hence the clerical formation of the Syro-Malabar Church became a matter of major concern of Cardinal Tisserant. The Syro-Malabar Church should gratefully acknowledge that it was under the leadership of Cardinal Tisserant assisted by Placid J. Podipara that definite and decisive steps were taken for the indigenous formation of the clergy and Religious of the Syro-Malabar Church.

As the head of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches Cardinal Tisserant did not want to perpetuate the neo-colonial situation in India. As a historian and orientalist he considered it his duty to find a positive solution to such a sad situation, which had existed from the period of western colonialism. It was during this period the unity of the Church of the Thomas Christians was shattered, and their liturgy, discipline, asceticism, theological and spiritual formation etc. conformed to the Latin Church. This anomalous situation of the Church of the Thomas

Christians in India had already become a great concern of the Holy See. It was well expressed by Pope Pius XI when he categorically asserted that the Church wants the Easterners to be Catholics and not Latin Catholics! "*Chiesa non vuole latinizzare, ma cattolicizzare*".

Cardinal Tisserant, on his return to Rome after his visit to India, took immediate steps to provide facilities in Rome for priestly formation of the Syro-Malabar Church. He asked the bishops of the Syro-Malabar and Malankara Churches to send priests and Religious to Rome for specialization. They were given accommodation at the Damascene College, which belonged to the Romanian Catholic Church. This college on the *Gianicolo* served the Syro-Malabar clergy for a long time.

Cardinal Tisserant was eager to qualify as many Syro-Malabar priests as possible in view of starting a centre for clerical formation in Kerala itself. I do gratefully remember that it was in this context together with seminarians of the other Syro-Malabar dioceses I was also chosen in 1955 for my studies at the Propaganda Fide College in Rome. Cardinal Tisserant and Fr. Placid used to remind us about our special obligation to study the venerable heritage of our Church. Fr. Placid was specially appointed by the Oriental Congregation to give classes on liturgy and history to the Syro-Malabar students studying at the Propaganda Fide College.

Cardinal Tisserant started a small Syro-Malabar Seminary attached to the

Ukrainian college in Rome. Very Rev. Fr. Placid J. Podipara was appointed as its rector. Three members of our hierarchy, archbishop Mar George Valiamattam, Mar George Punnakottil and Mar Paul Chittilapilly belonged to this seminary community.

Cardinal Tisserant was convinced of the urgency of proper centres of clerical and religious formation under the indigenous clergy where adequate ecclesial formation should be imparted based on the liturgical, theological, spiritual, ascetic and disciplinary heritage of the Thomas Christians. With this goal in view the Congregation for the Oriental Churches took the concrete steps to start St Thomas Apostolic Seminary at Vadavathoor. Though it was materialized fully only during the time of his successor, Cardinal Tisserant had already planned and approved the project. The Holy See generously contributed by subsidizing the entire cost of the construction and maintenance of this great institution. But in 1962 when it was time to start the Seminary the Syro-Malabar Bishops' Conference under the leadership of Archbishop Mar Joseph Parecattil of Ernakulam proposed two European Religious priests of the Latin Rite to the office of the Rector and the Spiritual Father of this new Oriental seminary! The Oriental Congregation strongly objected to it and insisted upon appointing indigenous clergy in charge of the formation. It was in this context Fr. Kurian Vanchipurackal was appointed as the first Rector of the St Thomas Apostolic Seminary at Vadavathoor. Had not the Holy See

strongly intervened the Vadavathoor Seminary would have been telling a different history as a carbon copy of the other Latin seminaries! Within a relatively short period Vadavathoor Seminary developed into an autonomous theological faculty and a centre of research known as Paurastya Vidyapitham, the Pontifical Oriental Institute of Religious Studies. I do feel privileged for having been able to serve this great centre of clerical and academic formation for thirty-four years, from 1965 to 1999. The Syro-Malabar Church as an expression of its profound gratitude named the auditorium of St Thomas Apostolic Seminary after H. Eminence Eugene cardinal Tisserant.

The Congregation for the Oriental Churches under the leadership of Cardinal Tisserant generously helped the CMI Congregation also to start their formation centre known as *Dharmaram College* in Bangalore for imparting an authentic Oriental formation to their Religious. It too has developed into a centre of Religious and academic formation. The real success or failure of every centre of formation is to be assessed on the basis of its fidelity to its nature and goal.

6. Ecumenical Vision of Cardinal Tisserant

Cardinal Tisserant was convinced of the ecumenical mission of Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara Churches. The churches which are not in communion with Rome generally accuse the Roman Catholic Church that communion with Rome will

be detrimental to the venerable eastern identity and heritage of the Oriental Churches, as they will be gradually absorbed into the Roman Church and its traditions. Lack of fidelity of the Catholic Orientals to their own heritage and an attitude of servile imitation of the practices of the Latin Church has become an ecumenical scandal. During the colonial period because of various vicissitudes of history some of the Oriental Churches were forced to conform themselves to the Church of the colonial rulers from Europe who belonged to the Roman Church. Cardinal Tisserant reminded the bishops of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church of their ecumenical mission and obligation in safeguarding their authentic eastern heritage in liturgy, spirituality, asceticism, discipline, theological thinking, traditions etc. It was written in the context of the introduction of the Latin devotions and ascetic practices by some of the priests working in the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church at the initial stage of the Reunion.

We can observe the ecumenical vision and foresight of Cardinal Tisserant when we turn to the decisions of the Vatican Council II, which insists upon the great obligation of the Oriental Catholic Churches to remain faithful to their venerable heritage:

“All Eastern rite members should know and be convinced that they can and should always preserve their lawful liturgical rites and their established way of life and that these should not be altered except by way of an appropriate and organic development. Easterners themselves should honour all

these things with the greatest fidelity. Besides, they should acquire an ever-greater knowledge and a more exact use of them. If they have improperly fallen away from them because of circumstances of time or personage, let them take pains to return to their ancestral ways” (Oriental Churches, No. 6)

The fidelity to one's own eastern and indigenous heritage will be a valid and convincing proof of the catholicity of the Church. Their earnestness to restore what is lost and to return to the authentic sources has a great ecumenical dimension. Though the Thomas Christians of India had their origin and growth in the east, outside the Roman Empire, communion with the Petrine See of Rome was an integral part of their ecclesiology and canonical structure. Fidelity to this authentic heritage will be a shining evidence of the true catholicity of the Church, which is unity in diversity. Moreover, the need, nature and universality of the Petrine ministry in the Church has to become more convincing and evident. Communion with Rome and the acceptance of the Petrine ministry should not be allowed to be misunderstood as a dangerous threat to the heritage and identity of the Oriental Churches but a source of inspiration and strength for protecting and promoting the venerable heritage of each Church and a shining witness of the true catholicity of the Church which consists

in the unity manifested through its rich diversity.

7. Cardinal Tisserant and the Study of the History of the Thomas Christians

History stands for transmitting the rich resources and heritage of the past for the positive and organic growth of the human family. As an eminent historian and scholar of international reputation Cardinal Tisserant could trace the maladies of the ancient Church of the Thomas Christians of India.

The leadership given by Cardinal Tisserant to the Syro-Malabar Church is the result of his profound knowledge of the history, heritage and relevance of the Eastern Churches in general and his vision of the bright prospects of the role of *Eastern Christianity in India*. He loved this Church because he knew its history. Mar Sebastian Valloppilly, the first bishop of Tellicherry narrates to us the touching scene of the parting message of Cardinal Tisserant on the occasion of his last visit to him in the hospital at Castel Gandolfo.

"I visited His Eminence in a hospital at Castel Gandolfo with Very Rev. Fr. Placid a few days before his death. He could hardly speak. He was panting for breath. His face brightened up when he saw us and said, "I love your Church because I know her history". We returned with stricken hearts pondering over the great love he had for our Church. He died on 21st February 1972 at the age of 88" (*Christian Orient*, Vol. V, No. 2, (1984), p.5.

Cardinal Tisserant and Fr. Placid firmly believed that the Church of the Thomas Christians of India, which existed in the heart of Asia for twenty centuries, has got a leading role to play in Asia and in the Catholic world as a whole. Its origin and growth in the east, outside the Greco-Roman influence, provided a favourable background to safeguard their earliest Christian identity and heritage. The liturgical link with the Church of the East associated them with the earliest Christian heritage. Cardinal Tisserant pointed out that the Syro-Malabar Church with its restored liturgy would have a better ecclesial identity than the Latinized Chaldean Church in the Middle East. The Cardinal assured that here is no basis for the futile fear of some of those who thought that the restoration of the authentic form of the liturgy might pave the way for the way for Chaldean jurisdiction over the Thomas Christians of India!

Historians who have studied the rise and decline of cultures, civilizations, communities and nations become increasingly convinced of the truth that any community cut off from its roots will gradually disappear from history. A tree cut off from its roots will fall into ruin and perish because it loses its link with its very life-giving source. The bond of unity, solidarity and strength of a community consists in the awareness of its common identity, nature and mission. When it loses this common link it is bound to decline and disintegrate itself.

The world loses nothing by the disappearance of anything that has got no identity and heritage of its own to

contribute. It is in this context the role of Cardinal Tisserant became prophetic. He knew the extent to which an ancient Eastern Church of apostolic origin in Asia was distorted and disfigured being cut off from its roots. He took the necessary steps to restore the eastern identity of the Church of the Thomas Christians. The purpose of his study on the Eastern Christianity in India was to make the Thomas Christians and others aware of their great heritage and mission. In this context we are reminded of the teaching of Vatican Council II on the venerable heritage of the individual Churches and the need to preserve it.

In the introduction of the book "*Eastern Christianity in India*" Cardinal Tisserant observes:

"It is not possible to write a complete history of the Christians of South West India because the ancient documents of the churches were destroyed by fire at the Synod of Diamper in 1599, but the main lines of that history are fairly known."

He concludes as follows:

"When I prepared the Dictionnaire de Theologie Catholique the article, which Father Hambye is now presenting in English, I came to admire greatly the Syro-Malabar Christians who remained constantly faithful to their religion despite centuries of adversity. My visits to them in November, December 1953 immeasurably increased this admiration. I hope the present volume helps them keep alive the

gratitude they owe their ancestors and made them ever more zealous for the defence and propagation of our common Catholic heritage".

The Vatican Council II invites the Catholic world to become more aware of the venerable heritage of the Churches to which they belong. This heritage forms part of the divinely revealed and undivided heritage of the Universal Church. It is the right and obligation of each individual Church to safeguard and promote its own heritage. The history of the Church of the Thomas Christians of India unveils to us the apostolic origin and development of an Eastern Church in the heart of Asia, outside the imperial influence of the Roman Empire. It is to be noted that from the fourth century the other Churches had become the official religion of the Roman Empire and that all the Oriental Churches, which were within the Roman Empire, came under its influence.

The teaching of Vatican Council II on the Oriental Churches is very relevant in the Indian context.


"For, distinguished as they are by their venerable antiquity they are bright with that tradition which was handed down from the Apostles through the Fathers, and which form part of the divinely revealed and undivided heritage of the Universal Church" (OE 1). "For it is the mind of the Catholic Church that each individual Church or rite retain its traditions whole and entire, while

adjusting its way of life to the various needs of time and place" (OE 2).

8. Conclusion

The importance of the prophetic role played by Cardinal Tisserant can be understood, assessed and appreciated only in its concrete historical context. His scholarly writings and effective leadership as the head of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches have made substantial contribution to the Oriental Catholic Churches. These Churches were made aware of their venerable heritage and of the need to recover what is lost. The Syro-Malabar Church is deeply indebted to Cardinal Tisserant for the extension of their ecclesiastical jurisdiction beyond the rivers *Pampa* and *Bharathapuzha*, the erection of the diocese of Tellicherry for the emigrants and for fostering the principle of the

equality of the rights and obligations of the Churches. His efficient and enlightened leadership made the Orientals aware of their right and obligation to impart clerical and religious formation in harmony with their own ecclesial identity and venerable heritage. Centres of clerical and religious formation began to be given financial assistance on a regular basis. As the liturgy is the source and summit of the life of the Church the contribution of Cardinal Tisserant has to be gratefully acknowledged by every Oriental Catholic Church especially the St Thomas Christians in India. He set a solid background for the organic progress of the Eastern Christianity in India. His courage of conviction based on justice and truth and the deep commitment to the catholicity of the Church render his memory dear and inspiring to all those who are privileged to know him closely.



MARY IN THE CATHOLIC-ASSYRIAN DIALOGUE: AN ASSYRIAN PERSPECTIVE

Bishop Mar Bawai Soro, Assyrian Church of the East

Introduction

The condemnation of Nestorius and his teachings at the Council of Ephesus (431) declared a fissure in the lives of our churches for centuries. Today this seemingly insurmountable theological rupture has been overcome by the "*Common Christological Declaration*" of November 1994. No longer will the cries of *Theotokos* be used as a source of division; and now the appellation *Christotokos* can finally have its proper dignity.

This centuries-long antagonism between the Greco-Roman Church and the Church of the East grew out of a dispute which arose over the proper employment of Marian terminology, namely, "*Theotokos*" and "*Christotokos*", in describing the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Of course, it was an ecclesio-political dispute between the Sees of Alexandria and Constantinople that eventually manifested itself in the theological contention and personality clash between Cyril of Alexandria and Nestorius of Constantinople, at the Council of Ephesus (431). This dispute ignited one of the most disruptive and destructive controversies in Christendom, which spread throughout the

entire Church in the Persian Empire. This horrible history indicates the importance of our subject matter and the need to treat differing views with charity and the need to seek understanding of the divergent formulations used by different peoples in different cultures and places.

As we seek to address the place of Mary in the Catholic - Assyrian Dialogue this ancient dispute is but one facet of the rich Christian Apostolic Tradition that both churches represent. Realizing the paucity of western literature on the Mariological devotions, spirituality and liturgical life of the Church of the East, I shall endeavour to present a brief overview of this tradition, realizing the limits of this talk. The accentuation will be placed upon the distinct traditions of the Church of the East while also dealing with specific points of convergence and divergence with modern Catholic Mariology.

Introductory General Overview

In general, for the Church of the East, the implication of venerating Mary "within the limits of orthodoxy" is that no matter how or when she is venerated through her devotions, feasts and memorials, the Virgin Mother is never to be elevated above her

Son, or even equated with Him (1 Tim 2:5-6). The Church of the East, in and through her liturgical celebrations, proclaims God's providence as made known in the Gospel, so that the Person and works of Jesus Christ are made prominent and glorified. This emphasis is given to preserve and make clear a distinction between Mary as mediator between God and men in prayer for help and comfort, which is encouraged among the faithful, and the uniqueness of Christ's role in mediating our redemption.

The forms of veneration of the Virgin and the theological language that expresses them, though frequently similar, are not always (or necessarily) the same in East and West. Yet in spite of that, the common origins of the shared apostolic heritage are demonstrated, in that we may discern a profound affinity with the contemporary understanding of Mary in the West. Today both churches could agree on honoring Mary's relationship to God, and to us, in three ways:¹

1. *Trinitarian Relationship*: Liturgy and popular piety in both Churches venerate Mary in terms and concepts that are the same as, or similar to, "*Handmaid of the Father*", "*Mother of the Son*", and "*Temple of the Holy Spirit*" (Lk 1:38; Lk 1:30-35).

2. *Christological Relationship*: Mary is the mother of Jesus; and, both of our traditions affirm that misunderstandings about this fact have had profound negative implications for relations between our two

churches since the time of the Christological controversies of the fifth century. However, this situation has been overcome with the signing of the "Common Christological Declaration".

3. *Ecclesiological Relationship*: According to the Gospel of John, Mary and the beloved-disciple are brought together at the foot of the Cross, where Jesus defines their new relationship as "mother and son". In this Scriptural context, Mary is seen to be forming, with John, the first Christian family - each seeing Christ in the other - thus, having a profound relationship to the rest of us, the Church (Jn 19:26-27).

1. Who is Mary for the Church of the East?

Let us now examine briefly the way the Church of the East conceptualizes Mary in her worship and the portrayal she attributes to her role in the Mystery of salvation. Regarding the spirit of devotion to the Virgin, there is little difference (except, perhaps, in emphasis) in the honor generally bestowed upon her in either the East or the West. In fact, the tradition of venerating Mary finds its origins in the Christian East, although the West has, throughout many centuries of reflection, developed its own particular theological thinking about the Mother of our Lord. However, following the axiom, *Lex Orandi Lex Credendi*, by making use of Church of the East "Book of Prayer", "Khodra",

1. For the Catholic position in support of the three "ways" of honoring Mary, see LG 53; and for the Assyrian position, see the Book of "Khodra", "Common Prayer for the Feasts of our Lady", vol. I, Trichur, India; Mar Narasi Press, 1962, 608-609.

particularly the liturgical anthems of the Feasts of our Lady, we will be able to gain some insight into the ways this tradition honors the Blessed Mother and the practice by which its adherents pray to her.²

The prayers and hymns of the liturgy also venerate with the highest marks of respect Mary's intimate and active participation in the mystery of the Incarnation.³

Furthermore, the Church of the East Fathers never tired of extolling Mary in terms that could not be applied to any other human being⁴. Among their numerous glorious epithets for her, the most significant is the title "Second Heaven". Mary is named Heaven because of God's unique relationship with her, whose womb became the Sanctuary of his Son.

On the matter of Mary's perpetual virginity, although there is no clear reference in the New Testament, the church Fathers, as early as the fourth century, began developing this dogma, matter of tradition that has been received in both churches, thus engendering no

disagreement. Instead, it is a firm point of convergence and source of harmony between the two sides of dialogue⁵. Moreover, it can be used as a demonstration of the universality of a doctrine as being held in all places by all peoples for all times.

For the Assyrian Church, the mysteries of Mary's virginal conception of Jesus and her perpetual virginity are taken in their literal sense, both theologically and pastorally, in order to avoid a mere symbolic approach to describing God's intervention in human history. The church affirms that, as guided by the Holy Spirit, the catholic and apostolic Church has, since its early formation, understood Mary's role in God's providence, and did so in such a way that conclusions about her virginity were read out of the Scriptures and interpreted in accord with the living tradition. So, in the Catholic-Assyrian dialogue, both of these teachings have been considered as points of convergence rather than divergence, since both traditions utilize biblical texts and receive the common tradition of the early Church upon which they base their acceptance. This acceptance is without any hesitation; for

2. Ibid., I, 608-609.

3. Khodra, op. cit., I, 609; 593.

4. For a similar concept in Catholic theology, see LG 66. Mary is singled out and set above all humanity, keeping in mind that Jesus Christ was human, but also God.

5. The seventh century theologian, Mar Babai the Great, in his *Memras*, "On the Union", stated the received tradition in the Church of Persia thus: "... he went out by the power of the Godhead which was united in him from within the womb through the bound and virginal gates of natural protection, while those natural seals, the keepers of holiness, were not destroyed, fore ever confirming by a token the testimony of chastity for ever", Babai the Great, *Liber de unione*, ed. A. Vaschalde, Louvain: L. Durbecq (coll. "Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Scriptores syri", 79-80) 1953 (1st ed. 1915), 188.

they have been affirmed, and are manifested in liturgical texts and in the writings of private theologians.

In summary, the faith of the Church of the East in the blessed Mother is inspired by the conviction that she was the unique vehicle through whom the Father chose the Incarnation to take place. A broad synthesis of this church's liturgical and theological sources would immediately make available to us the intimate kinship between the Son of God and his Mother, which in part will lead us to discern two further miraculous occurrences. (i) That God's grace must have preserved Mary, in a unique way, from any possibility or actuality of sin throughout her earthly life. (ii) At the end of her earthly life (at her death), the sinless Mary, in the totality of her being, through the redemptive act of her Son, realized the fruits of renewed instantaneously, just as believers will realize them at the Second Coming of Christ.

This broad overview presents us with a concise foundational understanding of Mariology as viewed by the Church of the East. There are still further considerations to be entertained, specifically regarding points for dialogue, which from the surface appear as divergent teachings. Our analysis will treat three specific areas. The first area will focus upon the issues of Theotokos and Christotokos by presenting the differences and the resolution achieved by signing the Common Christological Declaration in 1994. This resolution can serve as a model for the other points in the agenda of dialogue. The second area will focus upon the dogmatic declaration of the Immaculate

Conception. Finally the third area will treat the dogmatic declaration of the Assumption.

II. The Dialogue on Mary

Theotokos/Christotokos: divergent views as model for discussion.

So now, let us look at a synopsis of the various factors involved in the Theotokos/Christotokos controversy. Theologically, both the Catholic Church and the Church of the East have insisted upon acknowledging the two natures, divine and human, in one Person of Christ from the beginning of the dispute. In this they have always been in agreement. Where the differences came about was in accounting for a terminology that most fully expresses the union of those two natures in the person of Christ in relationship to Mary. The western Church adopted the term Theotokos, as articulated by the Councils of Ephesus and later as confirmed at the Council of Chalcedon (451). Meanwhile, the Church of the East continued to use the title Christotokos - a term of an older period that in the West was deemed inadequate for the purpose of accounting for a true metaphysical union of the natures.

The political isolation of the Church of the East under Persian - and later Arab, Mongol, and Turkish - rule made the resolution of this conflict almost impossible. The separation was not only ecclesial, but geographical, political, cultural, and linguistic. And, similarly, this division was greatly exacerbated from the thirteenth century on by the near destruction of the Church in the East and the loss of its

educational and monastic institutions. Nonetheless, the intention behind this Marian dispute, though noble in that it was aimed at venerating and praying to the Blessed Mother aright, has led our two churches over the past 1500 years to much frustration, mutual suspicion, and discord.

As a result of this adverse condition, the image of the Church both in the East and West has been hampered, in the eyes of the non Christians, especially in the Islamic world which uses this split as polemical argument against Christianity. Throughout all these centuries, the reactions and feelings of those outside the Church, those to whom we must make our appeal to "repent and be baptized", has, as a result, been one of scorn for us because of our lack of love for one another. They did not in the past, and do not now, see Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant or "Church of the East" Assyrians; they see only professed Christians. What we aspire for them to discern in us is an image of Christ, if only "as through a glass darkly", but this image appears to them murky because of our self-assertion.

This unfortunate situation continued up to very recent time. It wasn't until after the Vatican II Council that ecumenical relations began to improve between the two churches. On November 9, 1984, the present Catholicos-Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, Mar Dinkha IV, made this his first official visit to the Vatican and expressed to Pope John Paul II his desire that the ancient misunderstanding be resolved between the two ecclesial bodies. It was becoming clear

that both churches had long felt that the scandal of alienation had to be removed, so that the Church of Christ could present a common witness to the modern world.

In joy and hope the two leaders set in motion a process of theological dialogue aimed at bringing understanding and clarity to the issue under dispute. Between 1984-94 five meetings took place between members of the Pontifical Council, then the Secretariat, for Promoting Christian Unity and representatives of the Assyrian Patriarchate, in a spirit of understanding and mutual charity. A sincere desire on each side to understand the other's linguistic and cultural traditions and presuppositions led to the process which culminated in the setting forth of a "Common Christological Declaration" exactly ten years later, in November 1994. This new conformity removed mainly Christological ambiguities, which had for so long been the source of suspicion and distrust.

When Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV met for a second time and signed the Declaration on 11 November 1994, there was mutual agreement on, and reciprocal recognition of, the ancient Marian terms bearing Christological implications, "Theotokos" and "Christotokos". The two heads of our churches declared:

The same God the Word, begotten of his Father before all worlds without beginning according to his divinity, was born of a mother without a father in the last times according to his humanity. The humanity to which the Blessed

Virgin Mary gave birth always was that of the Son of God himself. That is why the Assyrian Church of the East is praying the Virgin Mary as "the Mother of Christ our God and Savior". In the light of this same faith the Catholic tradition addresses the Virgin Mary as "the Mother of God" and also as "the Mother of Christ". We both recognize the legitimacy and rightness of these expressions of the same faith and we both respect the preference of each Church in her liturgical life and piety⁶.

The central piece of this Christological Accord was a mutual agreement on Marian titles. Both titles, for long centuries, have in their respective traditions been held with utmost veneration in the minds and hearts of faithful. But through coming together in dialogue and through clarifying Marian theology, the Assyrian Church of the East and the Catholic Church affirmed their unity in the faith despite past suspicions on both sides. In the light of this harmony, both the Pope and the Patriarch declared that *"the controversies of the past led to anathemas... (and the) divisions brought about in this way were due in large part to misunderstanding"*⁷.

It was clear that by this declaration both heads of the respective churches were actually bringing to an end one of Christianity's oldest Christological conflicts and thus effectively initiating a

process whose ultimate aim is to heal a wound that has persisted for more than fifteen centuries in the Church, the Body of Christ. The humility that our churches have expressed in dialogue is born out of the recognition of our part in the long-standing disunity of Christ's body, and it reflects acknowledgement on our part that we have inflicted, as well as received, wounds that the body bears.

It evidently shows that in emphasizing in a dramatic way the place that veneration for the Blessed Virgin, and recognition of her unique place in the salvation history, can have great effect in drawing together those who love her Son. For, this accord has become the starting-point for the transformation of relations between the Catholic and Assyrian-Chaldean churches.

On the Immaculate Conception of Mary

Our Lord promised the Church, not new revelations, but an ever-deeper penetration into the Deposit of Faith. This is the teaching of the Catholic Church, a teaching congenial to the thought of the Church of the East. The teaching on the Immaculate Conception, which was defined by Pope Pius IX as dogma in 1854⁸, has been offered as a striking example of this truth. Was the concept of the Immaculate Conception so clearly present in Scripture so that without any assistance one could easily discern it? Not really! Accordingly, it is suggested that, with the Church's

6. Editorial, "Common Christological Declaration between Catholic Church and Assyrian Church of the East", L'Osservatore Romano, (Vatican City) 16 November 1994, weekly edition in English, 3.

7. Ibid., 1.

8. DS 1641; "...the most blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instant of her conception, by a singular act of grace and privilege granted by Almighty God, in view of the merits granted of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race, was preserved free from all stains of original sin".

assistance one might come to understand that this reality is implied in the words of God to the serpent in Genesis 3:15: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed"⁹. It is suggested that the Immaculate Conception may be similarly implied in the greeting of the archangel to the Virgin Mary: "Hail full of grace" (Luke 1:28)¹⁰. If Mary is the true subject of the prophetic pronouncement of Genesis, and she was never under the dominion of Satan, being in a perpetual state of enmity with Satan, the inference is drawn that she was immaculately conceived. Similarly, her being "full of grace" may imply, from this point of view, the grace of the Immaculate Conception. Regardless, we would still need assistance to be sure of these implications and inferences.

Let us now examine a prayer from the Liturgical Hours of the Church of the East used both by the Chaldeans and Assyrians for the feasts of Our Lady. Hopefully, it will shed some light on the question of the Immaculate Conception.

1. All the ground was dry, and (Gideon) wrung out the dregs (from) the fleece.
2. This was Mary, and much greater than this.

3. For as the fleece was dry, just so Mary was pure.
4. Lust did not entangle her, nor was she steeped in sin¹¹.

Therefore clearly the text cited above illustrates that Mary's freedom from sin has been extolled in the liturgies of the Church of the East and has been a part of the theological reflection of the church's Fathers from earliest times. They often spoke in glowing and sweeping terms about Mary's holiness, sinlessness, and grace.

However, it must honestly be said that the teaching of Immaculate Conception is problematic for the Church of the East, not for any reasons that could dispute the truth that Mary was preserved from sin, but exactly for the manner in which she was. This divergence in theology demands a corollary conversation concerning the meaning of "original sin", and of its impact upon the teaching of the Immaculate Conception. For the Church of the East, the idea that Mary was free from sin, and that therefore her conception must have been preserved from the taint of Adam's sin through the Immaculate Conception, is insignificant. Her Fathers did not believe that sin is inherent in, or a property of, the

9. "And the angel went into her and said to her, 'Peace to you, O full of grace' Luke 1:28, Peshitta. The rendering "highly favored", which would render this interpretation problematic, is preferred by many exegetes, today, and the translation of the verse is therefore a matter of dispute.

10. It should be noted that there is debate about the interpretation of Genesis 3:15. Exegesis in the Church of the East usually stops at identifying the "you" as Eve and the "your seed" as humanity in general. See Isho'dad of Merv, *Le Commentaire sur Genese-Exode* 9,32 du manuscrit (olim) Diyarbakir 22, ed., L. Van Rompay. Louvain: E. Peeters (coll "Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Scriptores syri", 483-484), 1986, 42-43.

11. Khodra, op. cit., I, 594.

nature of man¹². On the contrary, they stressed the goodness, and grace did not require an Immaculate Conception, but only a recognition of God's special preservative act. This argument finds its original formulation in Theodore of Mopsuestia and can be seen as so divergent from Augustine's own concepts, which are the basis of the two churches' subsequent theological explanations of grace.

The sixth Century Church of the East Fathers treated the subject of "original sin" in a different way which is more dynamic and personal. This theology arose from a debate between Bishops of the Church of the East and Kh'nana who was a professor from the school of Edessa, who taught that we did not have free will to choose whether or not to sin due to the fact that original sin was an inherited character of our human nature after the fall. The effects of these teachings were realized by parallel parochial and diocesan structures thus threatening the unity of the church. The Bishops countered by asserting that all men have a tendency to sin because of their perception of their own morality and limitations, not because sin was passed down to them through the "genetic code". Sin is not inherent in man's nature, but is a consequence of choices, namely, of the exercise of will. It is a property of will, not of nature. Therefore, for them, there was no imperative that the Virgin's birth be "preserved" from Adam's

sin, though it is still possible that God would preserve the Virgin from willful sin during her entire lifetime.

As we have seen from the Church of the East's liturgical texts, they venerate Mary as a sign of sanctity and grace, peace and reconciliation. That God purposely preserved her and kept her from every sin to make her more pure than all humanity is an idea, again, which is not uncongenial to us. That she therefore was made ready for the King of kings and the God of all to dwell in her would not be a matter of dispute. It is apparent that the Church of the East, in accord with the Apostolic tradition, has not stopped at ascribing to Mary a "special holiness"- on which may be attributed to the saints and to the righteous ones, moreover it goes beyond that ascription to extol her "complete holiness". If it was necessary for John the Baptist, the precursor of our Lord, to be pure and filled with the Holy Spirit, how much more would it seem necessary for Christ's Mother to possess holiness and grace?

St. Paul calls our Lord "a New Adam"- the new head of our race, who reverses the damage resulting from the sin of the first Adam. The Church of the East Fathers add that Mary shares in that work, reversing, as it were, the harm resulting from the disobedience of the first Eve, through her

12. The Synodicon Orientale, the compilation of canon law in the Church, records this condemnation: "...it was reported in our presence that there are some... who are doubtful in their mind concerning the true faith of orthodoxy. ...Sometimes they say that sin is implanted in nature, and some of them say that the nature of Adam was created immortal at first. (...) Again, we... alienate from our fellowship all who hand down or say that sin is implanted in nature and that men do not sin by their own choice, and all who say that the nature of Adam was originally created immortal", J.-B. Chabot, ed., *Synodicon Orientale ou recueil des synodes nestoriens*, Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1902, 196, 198-199.

perfect obedience¹³, thereby becoming "a New Eve". Further, although sinless, holy and pure from the womb of her mother, the blessed Mother was subject to the consequences of the first fall, namely, she was a recipient of physical pain and bodily death, and her humanity was therefore in need of the redemption her Son's death procured for all created things. Yet, God preserved Mary from sin, filling her with his grace, while for the rest of us - who are stained with sin¹⁴ - we are in need of renewal and of liberation through Baptism.

Thus there is considerable evidence of the convergence of the truth taught by the Church of the East and by the Papal pronouncement of the Immaculate Conception. True there are distinct differences in philosophical and terminological constructs used to convey this theological and dogmatic truth. These differences can be ascribed to our human limitations and perhaps they are not totally irreconcilable, especially since both traditions hold that the sinlessness and the holiness of Mary are due to a unique preservative divine act.

On the Assumption of Mary into Heaven

Let us now consider Pope Pius XII's Dogmatic ex-Cathedra proclamation of

Mary's Assumption in the year 1950¹⁵. Within this definition of Mary's Assumption into Heavenly Glory, there are contained three other Marian teachings, namely, the Immaculate Conception, divine motherhood and the Ever Virginity of Mary. I shall now treat only some of the prayers of the Hours that the Fathers of the Church of the East for the Feast of the "Departure" which offer liturgical proclamations and then, we will examine the relationship with the teaching of the Heavenly Assumption, as defined by Pius XII.

The first prayer used in the Assyrian Khodra states:

1. Christ, who for the honor of the repose of the Virgin Mary
2. Sent watchers from on high,
3. And they came to meet her in great dignity,
4. Which was appropriate for the holy body of his mother¹⁶.

This second prayer is used in the Chaldean Khodra, it states:

5. On the day of the departure of her soul from her pure body
6. The angels of heaven came for her honor with appropriate solemnity

13. "And mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be for me according to your word;" (Lk 1:38).

14. A prayer at the preparation of the host for the Eucharist proclaims concerning man's state before God "no man living is pure indeed"! Though the church has not recognized the doctrine of "original sin", it nonetheless recognizes a universal sinfulness into which all men fall by virtue of their choices.

15. DS 2333; "...We pronounce, declare, and define that the dogma was revealed by God, that the Immaculate Mother of God, ever Virgin Mary, after completing her course of life upon earth, was assumed to the glory of heaven both body and soul..."

16. Khodra, op. cit., I, 608.

7. She was borne upon the clouds and carried by spiritual beings
8. And among the orders of heavenly beings she is ever extolled¹⁷.

This third prayer also from the Chaldean Khodra states:

9. Angels from on high descended to honor her as they were commanded.
10. The thrones recited her glory; seraphim deemed her body blessed.
11. Cherubim sang praise with their hymns when they saw that she entered among their ranks.
12. Through her prayer there came help for all the sick at the hour of her repose.
13. She entered and flew on the clouds, and with her were companies of attendants¹⁸.

If Liturgy has an important role in the development of Church teachings, then, Church of the East Fathers are very clear in the exercise of that role. Due to Mary's obedience, unique status and role within the life, ministry, passion and glorification of her Son, she is portrayed in this text as having a unique ending of her earthly life, namely, at the time of her death. Their description of her repose (assumption, passing, or dormition) is one of glorification by the angels and of exaltation, namely, being taken up, into heaven. However, clear

terminology mentioning Mary's "body and soul", as in Pius' dogmatic definition, are not easily traceable in the liturgical tradition of the Church of the East.

But what the 13th century Father of the Church of the East, Shlimun of al-Basra, writes on this subject can be considered to complement this church's liturgical tradition and show convergence with the Catholic tradition. For Shlimun's statement makes clear how the church moves from liturgy to theology in forward action towards a deeper understanding of divine truth, already present and experienced in the various parts of the one apostolic and catholic church of Christ¹⁹.

We observe that, according to Shlimun, the object of Mary's being taken up into heaven was that she might be glorified in her total personhood, and exalted to an even more intimate relationship to the presence of God's Mystery. The tradition that Mary was not buried in the earth finds a strong affirmation here. Thus, for Shlimun, through her death, the Virgin has already reached a state of perfection where she eternally and immaculately exists beyond the limits of time and space. Furthermore, the emphasis of the apostolic witness in Shlimun's account is crucial, in that it shows that the author believed that the death and assumption of Mary was a belief that bore the seal of apostolic origin and authority.

17. The texts cited here are from the Khodra which is used by the Chaldean Church for the Feast of Assumption. See *Breviarium iuxta ritum syrorum orientalium id est chaldaeorum* [= "Book of Khodra"], Rome: Apud S. Congregationem "Pro Ecclesia Orientali", 1938, III, 364.

18. *Ibid.*, III, 517.

19. By the end of the 13th century, the teaching of Assumption of Mary into Heaven was already strongly held in both the Catholic and the Orthodox traditions.

It seems to me that both traditions affirm that an explicit mention of the assumption provides clear emphasis on the idea that the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ has made resurrection available for the rest of us, not as a possibility but as an actuality that subsists. And all the more here, since Mary herself was preserved from sin, the fruits of the redemption achieved by her Son on the cross were applied to her immediately without having to wait for the Judgment and Second Coming of her Son, Jesus Christ. In the mind of the Church of the East Fathers, the mystery of the Blessed Mother should be situated in relation both to Christ and to us, the church. For them, as for the Latin Fathers, Mary is the archetype of the risen Church. I therefore hold that although we may not have the same definitive formulation of this dogma, however, our teaching and faith is clearly identical. Once again pointing to the need to allow dogmatic truths to be formulated in different words while maintaining faith in the same divinely revealed truth.

III. Four Observations on Divergence

Let us now look at the following four observations accounting for the variant development of theological approaches in general, and the Marian teachings in particular:

1. Certain theological orientations peculiar to dissimilar geographical, cultural and linguistic contexts have shaped differently the human mind in each tradition, thus having a profound influence on an individual's understanding of God, self and the other. On the one hand, an Oriental's mind contemplates God

mystically and would not venture to think of God as less than an impenetrable Mystery, one who cannot be fully comprehended, but one to whom awe and worship are unquestionably due. On the other hand, generally speaking, a Western individual's mind tends toward the analytical, and though also understanding God as a Mystery, yet he or she will seek to deepen a personal understanding of God through more intense inquiry as represented in Saint Augustine's concept: faith seeking understanding.

2. This difference in emphasis - and the resultant conceptual difference - between the two approaches to the Mystery of God was even more enlarged after two major historical events in the lives of our two traditions: (a) the alienation of the Church of the East from the Church in the Roman Empire during the 5th century's Christological controversies, especially following the Council of Ephesus (431); (b) the 16th century division within the Church of the East which saw one segment of the Church (subsequently known as the Chaldean Catholic Church) establish full communion with the Roman See. Other non-theological factors have for centuries also played a significant role in making dialogue, rapprochement and the establishment of full communion virtually impossible, though people of good will from both sides might have wished otherwise. Thus the development of Marian dogma in the Catholic Church over this long period of isolation came to be viewed by the Church of the East as reason for suspicion and, therefore, as an obstacle to reconciliation, - since such theological development had been virtually unknown in her.

3. Since the end of the 13th century, due to the affects of the Mongol invasions and the systematic eradication of many Near East cultures - including the near annihilation of the Church of the East - the faithful in today's Church of the East have, to a great extent, lost contact with their own patristic and theological tradition. The lack of any ecclesial educational institute in the church today reflects the poverty and weakness to which this church has been reduced, and suggests the main cause of the loss of continuity with that tradition. The nineteenth century introduction of Protestant missions among the Assyrian people also did much to further confuse them, especially as regards the issue of Marian teaching. Certainly, theological dialogue and reconciliation between churches of apostolic origin are pursued wisely only when all of the concerned partners in dialogue have lived with fidelity to, and understood with clarity, their own particular theological and ecclesial heritage.

4. When Popes Pius IX and Pius XII pronounced the two new Marian dogmas in 1854 and 1950, respectively, what was implied, at least from the perspective of the Orthodox and Protestant Churches, was not only a development in dogma concerning the Blessed Virgin, but the affirmation of a developed ecclesiology of papal primacy as well. As a result, one may reasonably assume that if disagreement should be prolonged, even after a dialogue has achieved satisfactory results, the real reasons for the prolonged separation may not be related to Mariology so much as to differing conceptions of ecclesiology.

Despite these four causes of divergence, there is no doubt that, like the Catholic

Church, the Church of the East firmly believes that the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of our Lord and God, was involved in a unique way in the fulfillment of the mysteries of Christ, her son. This is why, with the rest of the early Church, both in the East and in the West, the church Fathers exalted Mary above all angels and men. They endowed her with glorious titles and profound epithets, and endorsed, within the limits of the orthodox faith, many forms of piety through which the faithful might venerate her.

In my opinion, the Assyrian Church of the East has in its liturgical and theological tradition enough evidence to warrant the conclusion that its teaching on Mary is in harmony with the theological essence and interpretation of the Catholic dogma of the Immaculate Conception and Assumption. I find no conflict in the way both traditions hold the Mother of our Lord in relation to the proclamation of the Gospel and the Kerygmatic preaching of the Resurrected Christ. Therefore, in the Catholic-Assyrian Dialogue, the teaching on Mary has been an aid. But even more, I am convinced that when we gather around her in veneration and prayer, we shall be blessed with her memory. And she will pray for us and for our churches as they seek communion in the name of Mary's Son.

In the light of insights such as these, when we realize that Marian teaching has not been a serious source of division, it should be clear to every believer that it is our own sinfulness and lack of charity toward one another that has transformed the holy memory of the Virgin into occasions for disputes and confrontation. Thus, we cause the Body of her Son, the

Church, to be inflamed with divisiveness and a lack of Christian charity and witness in the world.

IV. Concluding Observations

It seems that the real essence of Mariology is not what and how each tradition believes concerning the Blessed Mother, but it is a question of dogmatic discussion between our two Churches. Such an exchange would implicitly involve a secondary discussion of theological hermeneutic, in which case, these dogmas are contextualized and received by the local churches seeking the restoration of full-communication. I thus shall conclude with three insights into the significance of reconsidering certain proposals that have arisen from discussions of Marian dogmas.

1. The continuous ecclesiological and cultural relevance of dogmatic expressions is increasingly seen as crucial if in fact the Assyrian Church would be asked to accept the linguistic formulation of the two Marian dogmas as a necessary condition for restoring with the Catholic Church. A determinative element in the reception process of these two recent dogmas, by Assyrian Church, would be its relatedness to the inner faith of the Assyrian believer. Here a characterization is necessary to attract our attention: the distinction between doctrine and devotion. A critical method of approaching matters of faith should make clear to us that devotion varies from church to church, age to age, and from culture to culture, but doctrine should be stable and necessarily the same. Unless we

can have a dogmatic formulation without the discrimination of space and time, from age to age, and from culture to culture then the linguistic dogmatic formulation could become a serious obstacle in ecumenical relations. Realizing that we are always bound in time and space we must allow for the diverse formulations with a plurality of expression of the core of our Christian faith in a way that can be effective in the life of individual believers and their communities for the United Church of the future.

2. In the course of things, the formulation and declaration of Marian dogmas have elevated Mary, in the eyes of many lay people, to such an extent that she is no longer considered, by some, a mere human being. Instead, she now approaches much more closely to the Divine than to the rest of us. This criticism can equally be applied to elements in the theologies of both the Church of the East and the Catholic Church. A more moderate approach to Mariology should, therefore, depict Mary's position as genuinely both close to God (her Son) and to the Church (to us, her sons and daughter in Christ). A balanced approach to Mary should maintain both dimensions of her relationship, namely, the Christological and the ecclesiological; and, therefore, this should be sought for in the formulation of a Mariology for a United Church of the future.

3. Are the two Marian Dogmas as significant as the dogmas of the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation?²⁰ The answer is obviously, no! There is already a unity

20. See William Henn in the entry "Hierarchy of Truth", in J.A. Komonchak, M. Collins & D.A. Lane, eds., *The New Dictionary of Theology*, Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1991, 465.

existing between our two theological traditions. This unity will be more precisely appreciated when truths of Christianity are weighed rather than merely enumerated. If both our traditions have for centuries held foundational belief in the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation, then they can only be sure that other revealed truths may not be of the same importance, particularly for salvation. For the sake of ecumenism, a distinction must be made between truths pertaining to the end of salvation and others related to the means²¹. This is said in spite of the fact that all truths of our faith revealed by God must be believed the same way. But, there seems to be an ecumenical consensus that for the sake of Christian unity, we need to recognize the concept of a hierarchy of truth²² - a teaching articulated at Vatican II Council in 1964. (UR 11)

Finally, if our general agreement has been shown to exist on the level of the essence, namely, the content and meaning of the Apostolic faith, does it mean that also the dogmatic expressions of both Churches necessarily must be linguistically expressed the same? In this regard, as far as the MCTD is concerned, is the question of uniformity of dogmatic expression or symbolic form one of the prerequisites for restoring communion? Can the Assyrian Church of the East confess what is already preserved in her tradition concerning the Blessed Mother, without officially accepting new formulations?

May a humble recognition of our own feebleness prompt among all Christians a sense of closeness to God, and a zeal towards the faith and works required to prepare for the coming of God's Kingdom into our lives.

A Prayer

Now we stand at the door of opportunity, with the challenge of Christian love set before us. It is ours to take hold of the opportunity that the Catholic Assyrian dialogue affords us and to speak to one another as brothers seeking mutual understanding. Christ himself will surely be with us in this task until it is finished, for it is he who instituted his Church, poured out his unifying Spirit on his disciples and their followers, and prayed for their constant oneness. Our Lord has already blessed his with the unity which already exists in her confession of the Nicene faith, in her common hope of the resurrection, in the veneration of the Blessed Virgin, and in the charity she strives to demonstrate in his name, as well as in the sacraments of faith she administers in Baptism and Eucharist, and in the apostolic succession which she preserves intact. There already exists an "imperfect" unity among our churches. Therefore, let us strive, through dialogue the grace of God and the guidance of his Holy Spirit, to an ever more "perfect" unity.

21. Ibid, 466.

22. As indicated earlier in this lecture, a possible hierarchy of Marian Dogmas could be established in descending priority in the following manner: (i) Theotokos/Christotokos; (ii) Mary's Assumption into Heavenly Glory; (v) the Immaculate Conception.

THE SPEECH MADE BY HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II TO THE SYRO-MALABAR BISHOPS ON THE OCCASION OF ADLIMINA VISIT ON 13TH MAY 2003

Your Eminence Venerable Archbishop

Dear Brother Bishops,

1. "Peace be with you" (*Jn 20:26*). In this Easter Season it is fitting that I greet you, the Bishops of the Syro Malabar Church, with the words our Risen Lord used to comfort your father in faith, Saint Thomas. Indeed the origins of your Church are directly linked with the dawn of Christianity and the missionary efforts of the Apostles. In a way, your journeying here to meet me reunites the Apostles Peter and Thomas in the joy of the Resurrection as we join in proclaiming to the beloved people of India. "an inheritance which is imperishable, underfaded and unfading" (*1 Peter 1:4*). In a special way I greet Your Eminence, Cardinal Varkey Vithayathil, Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church, and I wish to thank you for the greetings and sentiments you have conveyed on behalf of the episcopate, clergy and faithful of the whole Syro-Malabar Church.

2. The liturgy of the Syro-Malabar Church, for centuries a part of India's and varied culture, is the most vivid expression of your people's identity. The celebration of the Eucharistic Mystery in the Syro-Malabar Rite has played a vital part in moulding the experience of faith in India

(cf. *Ecclesia in Asia*, 27). Since "the Eucharist, as Christ's saving presence in the community of the faithful and its spiritual food, is the most precious possession which the Church can have in her journey through history" (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*'9), I exhort you to guard and renew this treasure with great care, never allowing it to be used as a source of division. Gathering round the altar in "the fullness of him who fills all in all" (Eph 1:23) not only defines you as a Eucharistic people, but is also a source of reconciliation helping to overcome obstacles which can hinder the journey toward unity of mind and purpose. As the primary custodians of the liturgy, you are called at all times to be vigilant to protect against unwarranted experimentation by individual priests which violate the integrity of the liturgy itself and can also cause great harm to the faithful (cf. *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 10). I encourage you in your efforts to renew your "ritual patrimony" in the light of the Council documents, with particular attention given to *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, and in the context of the *Code of Canon Law of the Eastern Churches* and my own Apostolic Letter *Oriente Lumen*. I am certain that with prudence, patience and proper catechesis this renewal process will bear abundant fruit. The many positive

results already achieved by your efforts make this task less daunting and, in fact, will be a source of future strength. I encourage you to continue this essential work so that the liturgy will not merely be studied but also be celebrated in all its integrity and beauty.

3. In a similar fashion, constant commitment to fraternal charity and co-operation is required for the successful functioning of a Synod of Bishops. Here, I commend your unwavering dedication to this shared journey: a sign of strength, confidence and unity among the Syro-Malabar Bishops and “a particularly eloquent way of living and manifesting the mystery of the Church as Communion”. (cf Address to the Synod of Bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church, 8 January 1996, 4). The Synod, in fact, is one of the most noble expressions of affective collegiality between bishops and is a forum well-suited for discussing serious matters of faith and society in order to find solutions to the challenges that face the Syro-Malabar community (cf, *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, 4). Maintaining this necessary unity requires sacrifice and humility. Only through concerted mutual effort can you “sustain common works that intend to promote more expeditiously the good of religion, to protect more effectively ecclesiastical discipline, and also to foster more harmoniously the unity of all Christians” (cf *Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium*, Canon 84).

4. The issue of the pastoral care of Oriental Catholics in India and abroad continues to be of concern to the Catholic

Bishop's Conference of India and to the Syro-Malabar Synod. Here, I wish to emphasize the “urgent need to overcome the fears and misunderstandings which appear at times between the Eastern Churches and the Latin Church... especially with regard to the pastoral care of their people also outside their own territory” (*Ecclesia in Asia*, 27). It is heartening to see the strides you have already made in attempting to find a solution to this matter. I am certain that you will continue to work closely with your Brother Bishops of the Latin Rite and the Holy See to ensure that Syro-Malabars throughout India and the world receive the spiritual support they deserve in strict respect for canonical dispositions which are, as we know, appropriate means for the preservation of ecclesial communion (cf. *Christus Dominus*, 23; *Codex Iurum Canonici*, Canon 383 ...§.2; *Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium*, Canon 916 ...§ 4). It is necessary that clear distinctions be made between the work of evangelization and that of pastoral care of Eastern Catholics. This must always be done with respect towards the local bishops, who are placed by the Holy Spirit to govern the holy Church of God in union with the Roman Pontiff, the Pastor of the Universal Church.

5. Charity urges every Christian to go forth proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth. As the Apostle says, “For it I preach the Gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:16). Evangelization lies at the heart of the Christian faith. India, blessed with so many

different cultures, is a land in which the people yearn for God; this makes your distinctly Indian liturgy an excellent way of evangelization (cf. *Ecclesia in Asia*, 22).

Authentic evangelization is sensitive to local culture and custom, always respecting the "inalienable right" of each and every person to religious freedom. Here the principle remains valid: "The Church proposes, she imposes nothing" (*Redemptoris Missio*, 39). Therefore, in your relations with your brothers and sisters of other religions, I encourage you to "Strive to discern and welcome whatever is good and holy in one another, so that together you can acknowledge, preserve and promote the spiritual and moral truths which alone guarantee the world's future" (cf. *Address to Religious Leaders in India*, 7 November 1993, 3). This openness, however, can never diminish the obligation to proclaim Jesus Christ as "the way, and the truth, and the life" (*Jn 14:6*). Form the Incarnation of our Lord enriches all human values, enabling them to bear new and better fruit.

6. I join you in giving thanks that your Eparchies have been blessed with so many priests and Religious. To all of them I send the assurance of my prayers for the success of their ministry and for their lasting fidelity to their vocation. The burden of your pastoral mission could not be fulfilled without the clergy, your co-workers in the sacred ministry. Your necessary reliance on your priests compels you to foster a strong bond with them. They are your sons and friends. As their father and confidant, you must be ever "ready to listen to them and cultivate an atmosphere of easy familiarity

with them, thus facilitating the pastoral work of the entire Diocese" (*Christus Dominus*, 16)

Likewise, the Religious in your care are members of your family. The witness borne by so many men and women consecrated to lives of chastity, poverty and obedience stands as true sign of contradiction in a nation which is becoming increasingly secularized. "In a world in which the sense of God's presence is often diminished, consecrated persons need to bear convincing prophetic witness to the primacy of God and to eternal life" (*Ecclesia in Asia*, 44). The Bishop should assist in ensuring that candidates for religious life are equipped to meet this challenge through appropriate spiritual and theological preparation. I am confident that you will encourage the Religious in your eparchies to continue to revise, refine and improve their programmes of formation so that they can meet specific needs of the Syro-Malabar community.

7. The *ad Limina* visit offers you an opportunity, as Pastors of Particular Churches, to share with me a view of how the Holy Spirit is at work in your Eparchies. In fraternal union with your Venerable Major Archbishop, you have shared the challenges and accomplishments which mark the Syro-Malabar Church and its faithful members as they daily strive to fulfil their baptismal promises. In this year of the Rosary, I commend you, your clergy, Religious and laity to the protection of Our Blessed Lady, and I impart to you my Apostolic Blessings.

From the Vatican, 13 May 2003.

BOOK REVIEW

ANDREAS HEINZ: *Die Eucharistiefeier in der Deutung syrischer Liturgieerklärer: Die Liturgiekommentare von Georg dem Araberbischof (+724), Mose bar Kepha (+903), Dionysius bar Salibi (+1171)* [= Sophia. Quellen östlicher Theologie, Band 33]. Trier: Paulinus Verlag, 291 pp., paper DM 58.00 (ISBN 3-7902-1457-4).

It is not for the first time that we are pleased in reviewing one of A. Heinz's recent publications referring to the liturgical treasures of the Syro-Antiochene heritage. Being professor of liturgy at the theological faculty of Trier and research director of the *Deutsches Liturgisches Institut*, he has opened his field of research to the Churches of Syriac tradition. He is also collaborating with the *Centre d'Études et de Recherches Pastorales* (University of the Maronite Antonian Order) in Lebanon. The publication under review is enriching German theological literature by the fact that it makes, for the first time, accessible the three main commentaries on the liturgy of the Syrian Church of Antioch of George, Bishop of the Arabic tribes, Moses bar Kepha (Mūsē bar Kīfō) and Dionysios bar Salībī in German and in one volume. The German translations of George and Moses bār Kepha are based on "Two Commentaries on the Jacobite Liturgy" (eds. Connolly and Codrington), Oxford 1913, and of Dionysios bar Sālībī on CSCO XIV (ed. H. Labourt). The book also contains the translation of the text of the anaphora of St. James and of the document "Book of Life" according to the use of the church of Our Lady at Beroea (today Aleppo). We must be thankful to the author, that some introductory notes are preceding the translations. At the end of his work, he gives a short bibliography and several indices: biblical quotations, places, persons, and matters. In his Foreword, the Syrian Orthodox Archbishop for Germany residing at the monastery of St. Ja'qōb of Sarūg, Warburg (Westphalia), Mar Dionysios Isa Gurbuz, stresses the ecumenical and practical relevance of this publication that will also help the younger generation of Syrian Orthodox faithful brought up and educated in the emigration for whom the German language is much closer than the Syro-Turoyo language of their forefathers.

John Madey

NEWS

We express our deep felt shock and sorrow in the unexpected demise of our beloved Rev. Dr. Wilson Ukken who was our News Editor for 23 years. His valuable and dedicated service to Christian Orient will be always remembered. Fr. Wilson met with a car accident on 19th of May 2003.



He joined the staff of the Paurastya Vidyapitham and St. Thomas Apostolic seminary in 1980 and has served them as the head of the department of theology, controller of examinations, bursar of the institute etc. He was a dedicated priest, a committed theologian and a staunch defender of the individuality of the Syro-Malabar church. May the good Lord whom he served throughout his life reward him eternal happiness.

ADLIMINA VISIT OF THE SYRO MALABAR BISHOPS

The adlimina visit of the Syro Malabar bishops was conducted this year from 1st to 15th of May. On the 2nd May all the bishops together visited and gathered in the office of the Oriented Congregation for discussion mainly on the pastoral care of the Syro Malabarians residing outside the proper territory. The bishops later visited several congregations like Propaganda, Vatican State secrateriate, Congregations for the Doctrine of Faith, congregation for Eccumenism etc. On 10th May all the bishops offered Holy Mass together with the members of Syro malabar church in Rome. The bishops visited the Holy Father three times for personel talks, for common lunch, and for common gathering..

They also visited four Baselicas in Rome, namely Maria Magiore, St. Pauls, St. John Lateran and St. Peters. It is to be specially mentioned with joy that the newly printed Syriac texts of Syro malabar Qurbana and Liturgy of the hours were presented to the bishops.

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